

TITLE SEQUENCE

As the credits run, we INTERCUT the following two sequences:

EXT. NEVADA DESERT - IDOLS - DAY

A SLOW DRIFT through a collection of crudely constructed, surreal, six-foot tall "IDOLS." Like modern demons. Grotesque. Disturbing. WE LAP DISSOLVE between details of their twisted anatomies: headlamp eyes, bright metal claws, broken glass teeth.

EXT. NEVADA ROADS - DESERT - DAY

Two vehicles, one a Volkswagen "bus" decorated with stylized flames, the other a '66 Thunderbird, speeding along a series of eerily empty desert roads, somewhere in a wilderness of sand and heat.

END CREDITS.

CUT WIDE TO;

EXT. NEVADA DESERT - DAY

A violent WIND HOWLS around, but through the sand we-can just make out a large, ominous building: the HOUSE of William Nix. Its walls are white-washed and scrawled with GRAFFITI. The "family" of IDOLS surrounds the doorway, guarding it. ON SCREEN, the words: "Nevada - Thirteen Years Ago"

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - DAY

We're at the front door now, which stands open. Leaning against the door-frame is a scrawny, wild-eyed YOUTH, about sixteen. His name is BUTTERFIELD. He's got a brooding, almost sultry look on his face. One of his eyes is black, the other milky blue. He's whittling something with a scalpel. Distantly, the sound of CAR ENGINES. Butterfield narrows his eyes.

BUTTERFIELD'S P.O.V.

The Volkswagen "bus" and Thunderbird are approaching the house.

BUTTERFIELD

(softly)

Swann...?

He turns from the door. In his haste he drops the WOOD he's whittling. He's been carving a DEATH'S HEAD.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - ROOMS AND CORRIDORS - DAY

The house no longer serves any domestic function. It has become the temple and dormitory of Nix's small apocalyptic cult. As we go through the house with Butterfield we glimpse a little of what life here is like.

The rooms are murky, and chaotic. The walls, PAINTED with scenes of cities and landscapes BURNING, and creatures from some unspeakable nightmare ATTACKING, RAPING, and DEVOURING helpless humanity. The atmosphere is joyless, and oppressive.

The passages become progressively darker as the boy makes his way to the heart of the house. Only OIL LAMPS, set on the floor, light these claustrophobic corridors.

BUTTERFIELD

Master?

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - DAY

A dozen CULTISTS sit cross-legged on the floor in front of their leader, WILLIAM NIX. His black hair grows to his shoulders. His eyes are deep and glittering, his voice seductive. A terrifying yet charismatic presence.

All the Cultists - who are a cross-section of obsessives - wear the same simple T-shirts, painted with the cult's SIGIL. They watch Nix in adoration.

As Nix speaks, he juggles a FLAME, passing it from hand to hand with casual ease...

NIX

And the fire said to me: Nix, Nix,
you're my instrument. From now on,
you'll be called the Puritan...

CULTISTS

(murmuring)

Puritan...

NIX You will find a few good men and women, and together, together you will cleanse the world.

CULTISTS

Yes...

Butterfield enters.

BUTTERFIELD

Master?

Nix looks up.

BUTTERFIELD

Swann's here.

Nix rises, smiling.

NIX

(to Cultists)

We'll come back to this. Get about
your business.

As the Cultists disperse, Nix and Butterfield exit into

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

A place of nightmares. Hanging from the middle of the ceiling is another grotesque SCULPTURE, three times the bulk of a large man, and made of metal, fly-blown animal parts and knotted rope. It is vaguely cruciform, but its swaying, creaking bulk is not even faintly Christian. It is a perverse, sickening image, evoking insanity and agony.

From the shadows in the corner, we hear a young girl's soft **SOBBING**.

NIX

Hush...

Nix goes to the GIRL. She is twelve; beautiful, blonde, and presently in a state of mortal fear. She sits, bound, in a fetal position, her face soaked with SWEAT and TEARS, her mouth BLOODIED, her cheek BRUISED.

NIX

I said hush.

GIRL

Please. Let me go.

From the opposite corner the SCREECH of Nix's pet BABOON. Nix goes to it. The animal is large and lethal.

NIX

(to Baboon)

What is it?

The Baboon pulls on its chain, staring at the Girl and baring its teeth as it screeches.

NIX

(to Girl)

I think he's in love.

He unshackles the Baboon. The animal pads toward the Girl, trailing its chain.

GIRL

Keep it away from me.

Nix catches hold of its chain. Holds it back. The Baboon starts screeching again, scrabbling at the Girl, its NAILS catching her arms and legs, drawing BLOOD.

GIRL

Please... please...

Nix watches her terror dispassionately.

BUTTERFIELD

(also watching, wide-eyed)
Want me to shoot Swann?

NIX

You don't like him, do you?

BUTTERFIELD

He wants your magic.

NIX

Maybe. Go fetch him.

Butterfield exits. Nix advances on the Girl.

GIRL

What are you going to do?

CUT TO:

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - DESERT - DAY

The two vehicles come to a halt outside Nix's house.

From the Thunderbird steps PHILIP SWANN, a nineteen-year-old with shoulder-length hair and brilliant blue eyes. He's not conventionally handsome, but he's certainly striking.

From the passenger seat steps CASPAR QUAID, a black man, studious and intense. From the bus emerges MURRAY PIMM, skinny and jittery, and JENNIFER DESIDERIO, a woman with a steely gaze.

SWANN

(to all three)
Are we ready?

JENNIFER

(cool)
Say the word.

PIMM

(very nervous)
Look, maybe we should think this over.

On Swann, as he brings from his car three very bizarre pieces of METALWORK. We get only a tantalizing glimpse of them, as he slips them into his pocket.

SWANN

No. He's gone too far.

PIMM

So he took a child.

JENNIFER

He'll kill her.

PIMM

No he won't.

SWANN

(determined)
He's not going to get the chance.

Quaid checks a gun, then slips it into his belt.

QUAID

If he gets in our fucking heads he'll drive us crazy.

SWANN

So stay out here.

Swann starts towards the House. Jennifer is the first to follow, with the other two on her heels.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Butterfield comes to the door, as Swann steps inside.

BUTTERFIELD

He's expecting you.

Behind Swann, Quaid and Pimm exchange nervous looks.

SWANN

(to others)

Look around. If you find 'the
child, yell. She's got blonde
hair, that's all I know.

Butterfield turns away, smiling to himself. Swann follows
him.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - "MEDITATION" ROOM - DAY

Quaid looks into a large circular room where FIVE CULTISTS
(three men and two women) still sit. One of the women is
breast-feeding a baby.

1ST MAN

Hey, Quaid. I thought you said you
weren't coming back.

QUAID

I changed my mind.

1ST WOMAN

Come and join us.

She smiles a crazy smile. Reaches out for Quaid. A SNAKE
appears from around the back of her neck. Quaid recoils.

And now we see that there are snakes everywhere. In the
Cultists' clothes and hair. Even on the baby. Quaid turns
away. And - shock! - there's a SNAKE on the door frame,
winding around his hand. He strikes it to the ground, and
drives his heel down on its head.

SNAKE-HANDLER CULTIST

(angry)

Don't do that!

The Snake-Handler gets up. Quaid retreats from the door.
Snake-Handler picks up the dead snake and, lifting it above
his head, dribbles its BLOOD onto his face.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - "BEDROOM" - DAY

Jennifer enters a gloomy room. She goes to a mattress where
a BLONDE GIRL lies with her bare back to us.

JENNIFER

Don't be afraid.

The Blonde Girl, BARBARA, turns over. She has a dirty cloth pressed to a wound between her breasts. It is not the Girl, of course. She stares up at Jennifer, clearly drugged.

BARBARA

I'm not... want to see?

She pulls the cloth away. She has carved the cult SIGIL into her FLESH. The BLOODY KNIFE lies beside her. Jennifer retreats to the door, and exits back out into --

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Pimm is standing against the wall, clutching a CRUCIFIX. He is ashen with terror. Jennifer snatches the crucifix from his white-knuckled fingers.

PIMM

He's going to kill us all...

JENNIFER

Where did Swann go?

Pimm points down the passageway towards Nix's room.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY OUTSIDE NIX'S SANCTUM - DAY

Swann wipes sweat from his upper lip, then reaches down to his belt, to check the GUN tucked out of sight at his side. He turns the door handle.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

Swann steps inside. Nix's chair has its back to him. The folds of Nix's robe are visible, however. Swann hears a muffled SOBBING from the far side of the room.

On the Girl, now gagged and lying amongst bones and filth.

Swann starts towards her, his footsteps barely audible. As he approaches the chair - the Baboon leaps at him screeching!

He reaches for his gun. The chair topples. The Baboon, half dressed in Nix's robes, bounds towards Swann.

Swann FIRES at it. The bullet blasts off half its head.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - DAY

On Quaid, who draws his GUN as three CULTISTS appear in the passageway that leads to Nix's Sanctum.

QUAID

Stay the fuck away!
(yells)
Pimm! Get over here!

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

PAN UP from the twitching Baboon corpse to Swann as he struggles with the Girl's gag. He has laid his gun on the ground beside her.

SWANN

You're going to be okay.

Out of focus, behind him, the cruciform sculpture swings round. Nix is hanging on it, like an idol on a grotesque altarpiece.

The Girl sees Nix over Swann's shoulder. Terror crosses her face. Swann turns.

NIX

I knew you'd come.

He reaches down to Swann.

NIX

I've got so much power to give you, Swann. All you have to do is...beg.

SWANN

Fuck you.

NIX

You don't think I've got it to give?

SWANN

No!

Suddenly. Nix swoops down on Swann. apparently defying gravity.

NIX

You're wrong.

He catches hold of Swann with one hand and drives him back against the wall.

NIX

I could eat your fucking soul,
Swann.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Jennifer, reaches the door of the Sanctum. Butterfield steps from the shadows. His KNIFE flashes as it strikes Jennifer's hand. BLOOD SPURTS.

JENNIFER

Fuck!

She retreats, staunching her bleeding hand.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

Nix has Swann trapped against the wall and is working his fingers against Swann's temples. Working, working, like a psychic surgeon plying against the belly of a patient.

NIX

You want to know what the world
really looks like?

Swann struggles, but he can't get free of Nix's hold.

And now -- horribly -- Nix's fingers slide beneath the skin of Swann's temples, without a drop of blood being spilt.

NIX

Want to see flesh with a god's
eyes?

Swann SCREAMS as Nix's mind-hold seizes him.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Quaid levels his gun at Butterfield, who is guarding the Sanctum door. Jennifer is at Quaid's side.

SWANN (V.O.)

Aah!

QUAID

Get away from the door!

Butterfield shakes his head. Quaid FIRES. The bullet. strikes the wall beside Butterfield's head. He retreats, growling like a rabid animal. Quaid kicks the Sanctum door open, and enters.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

QUAID

Swann?

NIX

(to Quaid)

Here he is.

Swann stumbles into the middle of the room, the whites of his eyes blood-red.

NIX

Take a look, Swann! These are your friends.

On Swann, reeling like a drunkard as he looks up at Quaid and Jennifer.

JENNIFER (V.O.)

What have you done to him?

SWANN'S P.O.V.

of Quaid and Jennifer. To Swann's eyes, their faces seem to be MORPHING. Their humanity is MELTING AWAY. What's left is like a jellyfish with black, soulless eyes: PRIMEVAL MUCK.

QUAID (V.O.)

Swann. It's okay.

Quaid reaches for Swann, who retreats in horror, shaking his head violently.

SWANN

Don't touch me. He's got... got into my head.

NIX

You want to be like that, Swann?
Mud and shit?

Swann turns away from Quaid and Jennifer in disgust.

SWANN'S P.O.V.

of Nix, his arms outstretched in welcome. His face has an aura of pulsing light.

NIX

Come here. Share the power.

ON a GUN, leveled. .We don't see by whom. The trigger is pulled.

The bullet strikes Nix's back and explodes out of his chest.

ON SWANN, staring at Nix.

SWANN'S P.O.V. of Nix, as the aura of light dies.

Just for a moment - a terrible moment - Swann glimpses something else. MORPHING out of Nix's features. A NIGHTMARE FACE with waves of DARKNESS emanating from the middle of its forehead.

Swann covers his eyes.

NIX

(raging, terrifying)

Swann! Swann!

Nix staggers, letting out an ungodly HOWL, and drops to his knees, clutching the WOUND. As he falls, he reveals the ashen Girl, who is still holding Swann's smoking GUN.

NIX

(a roar)

Help me!

Swann shakes his head, ridding himself of Nix's mind-control.

SWANN

Jesus-

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY OUTSIDE SANCTUM - DAY

Pinon stands guard, his gun pointed on several cultists.

1ST CULTIST

(with distressing confidence)
You can't kill him.

2ND CULTIST

He'll just rise up again!

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

On Nix, doing just that: rising up. Right hand clamped to his bloody chest, left hand reaching for Swann.

NIX

Help me!

Quaid FIRES at him again. Strikes his shoulder. And again. Strikes his leg. Nix collapses to the ground,

JENNIFER

Quickly!

They have come prepared for this. Swann now takes from his jacket the three strange pieces of METALWORK. There are SCREWS in then all.

NIX

(seeing)

Swann? What are you doing?

SWANN

Binding you.

He clamps one of the pieces over Nix's EYES. It fits like an eyeless mask. Nix thrashes and SCREAMS. Swann lays his hands on the side of the mask, and — LIKE MAGIC -- his touch makes the screws tighten of their own accord, grinding into Nix's flesh and bone with a gut- wrenching SOUND. BLOOD runs from the screw-holes.

NIX

Fuck you, Swann! Fuck you!

Now the second piece, over his MOUTH.

NIX

Sw—

He's silenced. The piece screws itself into-his head, like the first. And now comes the third and final piece: over the nose and into the ears. Again, it screws itself into place.

Swann has done all he can. He retreats from Nix's body, as it continues to convulse. We go from face to ashen face, as each man and woman watches and waits. Why won't he die?

And now, at last the violence of Nix's death-throes diminishes. Nix's body bends like a bow, arching off the ground, and with one last, terrible spasm, he dies.

GIRL

(quietly)

Is it finished?

SWANN

It's finished.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - DAY

The Cultists' faces slacken, as though some mental hold Nix had upon them has disappeared. Then they start to retreat, their confidence and courage gone.

Pimm steps into the Sanctum.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

The five assassins, including the Girl, stand around Nix's body. Swann has his arm around the Girl.

PIMM

Dead?

QUAID

Dead.

PIMM

What now?

SWANN

We bury him so deep no one will ever find him.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - WIDE SHOT - DUSK

The wind has died away. It's eerily calm. Butterfield dashes towards camera, then halts.

HE LOOKS BACK, as Nix's killers load his huge, limp CORPSE into the back of Murray Pimm's bus.

ON Butterfield. He watches, with a feral look on his face.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. LOS ANGELES - MONTAGE - DAY

The city looks magical in the spring light, its palms and gleaming towers, its rivers of sun-baked traffic, evoking some fantastical metropolis. This, for all its smog and congestion, is a city of exoticism and enchantments.

ON SCREEN, the words: "LOS ANGELES - THIRTEEN YEARS LATER"

EXT. STARDUST HOTEL - DAY

The facade of this small HOTEL off Hollywood Boulevard needs a lick of paint, and the neon sign is blinking fitfully, but it has a certain charm.

INT. STARDUST HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

A large deteriorating mural of Hollywoodland, depicting a host of 50's movie stars, dominates the lobby. At the front desk - with his back to us at present - stands HARRY D'AMOUR. He is having difficulty getting the pretty but vacant BLONDE at the reception desk to comprehend his name.

BLONDE GIRL

How'd you spell that again?

HARRY

D.A.M.O.U.R. D'Amour. Harry
D'Amour.

BLONDE GIRL

D'Amour.

HARRY

Right.

BLONDE GIRL

Isn't that French for something?

ON THE BELLBOY, approaching Harry from the front door.

BELLBOY

Mister D'Amour?

HARRY

(to Blonde)
Yeah. It's French.

BLONDE GIRL

For love, right?

BELLBOY

Mister D'Amour?

HARRY

(to Blonde)
Right.

BLONDE GIRL

(grinning)
That's so cool.

BELLBOY

Mister D'Amour?

Harry turns. He's wearing a washed-out Grateful Dead t-shirt, an Italian cut linen suit, and glasses. He's handsome, unshaven, 35-ish, with an open easy smile.

HARRY

Yeah?

BELLBOY

You haven't paid the cab. He won't give us your bags 'til you pay him.

HARRY

How much?

BELLBOY

Thirty-five bucks.

HARRY

Tell him he can keep them. The Bellboy looks puzzled.

HARRY

Just kidding.

Harry gets out his wallet and hands over four ten-dollar bills.

HARRY

I've got my life in there.

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

On the suit-case, which is now on the bed. Harry flings it open. Inside, mingled with the clothes, a bizarre collection of items, which he tosses out onto the coverlet. A GUN. A CRUCIFIX. A STATUE of Shiva, the Hindu Lord of creation and destruction.

ON HARRY, as he heads into the bathroom. Turns on the shower. Starts to undress.

EXT. STARDUST HOTEL - DUSK

Harry, his hair still wet from his shower, steps out into the sun. Squints. Puts on sunglasses.

HARRY

Hello, L.A.

BELLBOY

Have a nice evening, Mr. D'Amour.

HARRY

You bet.

EXT. MELROSE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Harry stands, in a shabby doorway across the street from a classy restaurant. It's RAINING.

ON TAPERT, a middle-aged, balding man with a very pretty WOMAN opposite him, sitting at a table close to the window. Tapert makes a joke (unheard). The woman laughs.

ON HARRY, chewing on a hamburger, as he speaks into his tape recorder.

HARRY

Nine-eighteen p.m. Tapert's either got a great sense of humour or he's paying her to laugh.

(looks at hamburger in disgust)
Jesus.

On Tapert, as he rises from the table.

HARRY

(into tape recorder)
He's finished.

Tapert exits the restaurant, and crosses the street. Harry tosses his half-eaten hamburger away, and goes to his car.

EXT. HARRY'S CAR - MELROSE - NIGHT

Harry pulls the parking ticket off the windshield, screws it up and gets in.

INT. HARRY'S CAR - MELROSE - NIGHT

HARRY

(into tape)
Nine twenty-six p.m. He's off again.

He turns the key in the ignition.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUAID'S OFFICES - SILVERLAKE - NIGHT

In neon blue and purple, a sign blazes in a store window. It reads: TAROT CARD AND CRYSTAL READINGS - \$15 SPECIAL

ON TAPERT, as he hurries across the street, and through the door beside the store window.

WE PAN OFF the door as Harry's car comes to a halt on the far side of the street.

Harry gets out of the car. Stares at the sign in the window, puzzled.

HARRY

Superstitious?

He starts across the street. Suddenly:

TAPERT (V.O.)

Oh my God!

Tapert emerges, his face white with terror. He stumbles to his car, and he's away. Harry freezes, caught between the need to follow Tapert and sheer curiosity. He gives in to the latter, and steps inside.

INT. QUAID'S OFFICES - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

An illuminated ARROW points up the stairs. Harry ascends, past faded PHOTOGRAPHS of Caspar Quaid with famous faces.

At the landing, the passageway turns ninety degrees. Harry halts, and takes out his GUN.

There's a strange RUMBLING SOUND approaching from round the corner. Harry chances a look. There's a short length of passageway, leading to an open door. From the threshold a CRYSTAL BALL rolls towards Harry, BLOOD-SMEARED. This is the source of the rumbling. Harry stops the ball before it falls down the stairs.

Dead silence. After a beat, Harry creeps towards the open door. He pushes it open. Inside, chaos. The fake antique FURNITURE is splintered, the ASTRAL CHARTS slashed.

INT. QUAID'S OFFICES - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

There are two offices. In the front, a Waiting Room, into which Harry now steps. Beyond it, through a door that stands

narrowly ajar, the Fortune Telling Room.

From out of the Fortune Telling Room, a MOAN.

QUAID (V.O.)

Ahh. . .

Harry crosses the Waiting Room, reaching into his jacket for his gun. Suddenly, a nightmarish FIGURE leaps from the shadows.

His name is RAY MILLER. He's as crazy as a rabid dog, teeth sharpened, eyes wild. Nix's SIGIL is tattooed on the middle of his forehead. He STRIKES the GUN from Harry's hand and goes for his throat.

Harry reaches out behind him, picks up a phrenologist's BUST and SMASHES it on Miller's skull.

Miller reels back. Harry makes a dash for the door to the Fortune Telling Room.

MILLER

Fuckhead.

INT. QUAID'S OFFICES - FORTUNE-TELLING ROOM - NIGHT

A mysterious, candle-lit space. In the middle of the room, a table. At it sits Quaid. thirteen years older. He has been tortured close to death. Several small SCALPELS protrude from his chest and neck. His life is ebbing away. On the table in front of him, a fan of TAROT CARDS, BLOOD-SPATTERED.

Harry races in through the open door from the Waiting Room.

HARRY

What the fuck!?

Harry picks up the PHONE. It's dead. Miller charges at the door.

HARRY

Shit!

Harry SLAMS the door in Miller's face, and locks it.

As he does so, the candles FLICKER. Harry looks up. A FIGURE looms from the darkness behind Quaid. He's in his late twenties: an androgynous, disturbing sight. His long hair is drawn back into a pony-tail. His mismatched eyes - one black, one milky blue, tell us that he is Butterfield. His hands are BLOODY, and he carries one last SCALPEL.

HARRY

(to Butterfield)
Don't touch him."

Butterfield strokes the wounds on Quaid's cheek. Quaid sobs in pain.

BUTTERFIELD

What are you going to do about it?

Miller's hand tears at the wood around the lock from the other side. His fingers appear, scrabbling to tear the lock out. Harry doesn't move, or Miller will be through.

BUTTERFIELD

(to Harry)
Ever watched a man die? If you watch very closely, you can sometimes see the soul escaping. And if you're very quick, you can catch it.

QUAID

Please... Butterfield... I wasn't there. Ask Pimm.

BUTTERFIELD

Pimm's dead. Jennifer Desiderio's disappeared. They knew the Puritan was coming home.

As this exchange goes on, Miller pulls the lock out of the door and starts to THROW HIMSELF against it from the other side. It's all Harry can do to keep himself from being pitched across the room. He looks around for some means of defense. There's a crack in the drapes to the left of the table. Behind it a WINDOW.

BUTTERFIELD

So do you. You've seen the future. Haven't you?

QUAID

Yes.

BUTTERFIELD

And are you afraid?

QUAID

Yes.

Suddenly, Harry steps aside. The door's flung open. Miller CHARGES in. Harry catches hold of his arm, and THROWS him against the drape. The window CRACKS; the drape comes down around Miller. Amber STREETLIGHT floods in.

Butterfield is momentarily distracted. Harry STRIKES the scalpel from his hands.

Miller, meanwhile, is struggling to free himself from the folds of the drapes. Harry lands a solid KICK to the man's belly. Miller is THROWN back against the cracked window, which SHATTERS. Still wrapped in the drape, he FALLS OUT.

Harry turns back to arrest Butterfield, but he's already making his escape. Harry starts after him.

QUAID

(to Harry)

Don't leave me.

He turns back. TEARS are pouring down the man's face. Harry goes back to comfort Quaid, as Butterfield escapes down the stairs.

HARRY

You need an ambulance.

QUAID

(in pain)

Too late. Why are you here? Did you come... up here for a reading?

Quaid takes hold of Harry's hand.

HARRY

NO ... I...

Quaid stares at Harry's HAND. Fascinated, he momentarily forgets his pain. He traces the lines with bloody fingers.

QUAID

(quietly)

My God.

HARRY

What?

QUAID

You've taken some strange journeys in your life.

HARRY

Yeah. You could say that.

QUAID

You're drawn to the dark side, over and over. And it's drawn to you.

(looks at Harry)

You don't like that.

HARRY

Not much.

QUAID

You can't change it. You have to walk...

(coughs)

...walk the line between Heaven and Hell. It's your destiny. Accept it.

Harry takes his hand from Quaid's grip. Quaid winces in pain.

HARRY

Hold on.

QUAID

I'm not afraid to die. There's something terrible... coming home...

HARRY

The Puritan?

QUAID

Yes...

HARRY

Who is he?

Quaid shudders, and dies.

HARRY

(softly; sadly)

Shit.

He looks away, down at the CARDS. All have been turned over but ONE. He turns it. The card is the Ten of Swords which pictures a prostrate man against a thunderous sky, pierced by all ten swords. An image of death and desolation.

EXT. QUAID'S OFFICES - ALLEY BEHIND BUILDING - NIGHT

The flashing LIGHTS of two patrol cars illuminate the scene. DETECTIVE EDDISON, a surfer-turned-policeman with buzz-cut blond hair, heads along the alley with Harry. He's midway through taking Harry's statement. There are already two OFFICERS examining the drapes. We can't yet see the body.

EDDISON

(to Harry)

What were you doing up there?

HARRY

I'm a private detective. I was hired to follow somebody for a few days. A guy called Tapert. Insurance fraud.

EDDISON

(writing)

Tapert. So, now I've got Tapert, Butterfield.

HARRY

Tapert's got nothing to do with this. He came here to get his palm read.

EDDISON

What makes you so sure?

HARRY

(shrugs)

I got a file on him two inches thick. He's a petty fraudster. This is something else. Ever heard of someone called the Puritan?

EDDISON

New one on me.

(to Officer)

Okay. Let's see him.

OFFICER #1 shakes his head, and opens up the drape. Broken GLASS drops from the folds, but that's all. Miller has gone.

EDDISON

Where the fuck is he?

HARRY

He got up and walked.

EDDISON

(looking up at window)
After that fall?. He must have
broken half his bones.

WE MOVE IN ON HARRY, as he stares down at the drape.

HARRY

I don't think he'd have given a
shit.

CUT TO:

INT. BUTTERFIELD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The rooms are spartan. Nothing on the walls. Nothing on the
floors. Very little furniture.

Butterfield sits beside the window, obsessively combing his
long hair. There is something feminine about him now: his
voice a whisper, his stare distracted. If we didn't guess it
already, we're in the presence of a madman.

Miller is squatting against the wall, picking shards of GLASS
out of his torso. It hurts, but he's enjoying himself.

BUTTERFIELD

D'Amour... D'Amour... Why do I know
that name?

MILLER

I know him. I saw him.

He stops to pull out a particularly large piece of glass,
sighing with pleasure.

MILLER

I saw him on T.V. Some kid got
possessed and he saved the little
bastard's life.

BUTTERFIELD

He's a priest?

MILLER

No. He's just a guy who's got a
nose for this shit.

(a beat. A smirk)

Like you.

A long beat of silence. Butterfield combs. Miller digs for
glass.

BUTTERFIELD

I don't want him getting in the way.

MILLER

He won't.

Another silence.

BUTTERFIELD

(dreamily)

We've all of us waited too long to have the homecoming spoiled.

MILLER

What do you mean, "all of us?"

BUTTERFIELD

You didn't think it was just going to be you and me? A lot of people believed in Nix. They haven't forgotten his promise.

MILLER

About?

BUTTERFIELD

Death.

MILLER

What about death?

BUTTERFIELD

(a beat)

It's an illusion.

CUT TO:

EXT. PHILADELPHIA STREET - MORNING

On screen: Philadelphia

A suburban street. Early morning light.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - PHILADELPHIA - MORNING

CLOSE-UP of a PHOTOGRAPH of the Cultist with the Painted Face, from the opening scene, standing outside Nix's house in Nevada. His name is Norman Sanders.

ON NORMAN, thirteen years older, looking down at the photograph. He lays it down, beside a letter, on which two

words are written: "Homecoming Time."

Norman smiles to himself. Goes to the wardrobe. Gets out a small suitcase. His WIFE'S BODY is slumped in the wardrobe, glassy-eyed.

CLOSE UP of letter --

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN IN MIAMI HOUSE - DAY

-- and DRAW OUT from the letter to a different interior, a different domestic circumstance.

On the screen: Miami.

BARBARA - the blonde girl who carved the cult's sigil into her chest - is washing her hands. She casually dries them, and picks up the letter, walking past her HUSBAND and SON, both DEAD at the breakfast table, BLOOD spreading around their heads. When she gets to the door she steps over the body of her DAUGHTER, who has also been shot trying to escape her mother's murder spree.

ON THE RADIO, George Harrison sings "My Sweet Lord."

RADIO

"I really want to see you, Lord,
And it won't take long, my Lord, My
sweet Lord..."

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN ANTONIO 200 - REPTILE HOUSE - DAY

On screen: San Antonio.

A ZOO-KEEPER wanders into the darkened interior of the Reptile House.

INT. REPTILE HOUSE - DAY

The Zoo-keeper's benign expression changes at the sight of the chaos inside. The glass cases have been SMASHED. Another KEEPER lies on the ground, his face pulped. A few SNAKES slither around his body, but most of them have gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. SNAKE-HANDLER CULTIST'S CAR - DAY

The Snake-Handler Cultist drives at speed.

INT. SNAKE-HANDLER CULTIST'S CAR - DAY

PAN UP from another letter'- with the same message - on the dashboard, to the crazed face of the Snake-Handler. PAN TO the back of the car. IT SEETHES WITH HUNDREDS OF SNAKES.

EXT. SWANN'S MANSION - DAY

It's early morning in Bel-Air. The sun shines down on a millionaire's paradise: a huge house surrounded by a jungle of trees and blossoms.

EXT. SWANN'S MANSION - POOLSIDE - DAY

The blue water glitters in the noon-day sun. And a WOMAN -- her body perfectly proportioned -- glides under the surface, emerging at the shallow end, where the housekeeper CLEMENZIA is setting a tray on a table.

CLEMENZIA

Coffee, Mrs. Swann?

Mrs. Swann's name is DOROTHEA. She is a beautiful and sensual woman.

DOROTHEA

Thank you.

She dries off.

DOROTHEA

Where's Mr. Swann?

CLEMENZIA

In his study.

(a beat)

He got something on his mind?

DOROTHEA

Why?

CLEMENZIA

Bad mood today.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - STUDY - DAY

Venetian blinds shut out most of the sunlight, but a lamp burns on the desk (huge), showing us the furniture (leather), the books (innumerable), and the figure of SWANN, sitting behind the desk smoking a CIGAR. He's lost some hair and

some colour over the years, but he still has the same hypnotic eyes.

He studies the L.A. TIMES in front of him.

ON THE OPEN PAGE

"Fortune Teller Brutally Murdered," the headline announces. Underneath, a PHOTOGRAPH of Quaid's wrecked room. WE CLOSE IN on the photograph, and catch a glimpse of Harry, standing looking at the chaos. CAMERA. MOVES DOWN to the text beneath, and on to the name "Harry D'Amour."

ON SWANN, pensive as he studies the paper.

DOROTHEA (V.O.)

(softly)

Hey...

He looks up, startled.

DOROTHEA The sun's shining out there. Dorothea is dressed in a white robe now. She literally brings light into this gloomy room. On the shelves behind Swann are a number of art brut figurines, vaguely recalling the idols outside Nix's "temple."

DOROTHEA

Bad show last night?

SWANN

(wearily)

The usual. Full house. Standing ovation. I tell them it's magic...

DOROTHEA

(distastefully)

... they believe you.

SWANN

Yeah.

(a beat)

Remember Quaid?

DOROTHEA

Sure.

SWANN

Somebody killed him.

DOROTHEA

Oh God.

SWANN

(disturbed)

I just saw him.

A difficult silence. Then Swann crosses to the door.

SWANN

I'm putting in a new illusion
tonight. Will you be there?

DOROTHEA

Sure. You want me to find out
about Quaid? I mean, the funeral?

SWANN

No.

(superstitiously)

I'm not going near him.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - LOBBY - DAY

VALENTIN is overseeing the hanging of a new piece in Swann's collection: a huge, framed POSTER from a late nineteenth century magic spectacular. Valentin is fifty or so, his gray hair combed back close to his scalp. Immaculately dressed in a distinctively European fashion. Precise. Cautious. Elegant.

He orders the TWO PICTURE-HANGERS in a clipped fashion.

VALENTIN

Higher. Another inch. The left
hand side's too low.

Dorothea descends the stairs, dressed for the day.

DOROTHEA

Valentin?

VALENTIN

(to Hangers)

Good. There.

(to Dorothea)

Yes?

DOROTHEA

(gives him the newspaper)

You saw this?

Valentin nods. They walk back through the house together, while the picture-hanging goes on behind them.

DOROTHEA

I want you to find this man D'Amour
for me.

She passes the newspaper to Valentin. He looks down at it.
ON NEWSPAPER.

C.U. of Harry's blurred PICTURE.

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Harry is sprawled on the bed, in his under shorts. A shaft of
sun darts between the drapes, missing his face by inches.

Somebody is knocking on the door, hard.

HARRY

(waking)
What...?

He rolls over. The sun strikes his eyes. He winces.

HARRY

Shit.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

Mr. D'Amour?

HARRY

Go away.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

It's one in the afternoon.

HARRY

What are you, my mother?

VALENTIN (V.O.)

I need to speak to you, Mr.
D'Amour. About last night.

Harry gets up and stumbles to the door. He opens it a
little. The face of VALENTIN is visible through the crack.

HARRY

Whatever I said, I didn't mean it,
okay? I get a few drinks inside me --

VALENTIN

We've never met.

HARRY

Then what do you want?

VALENTIN

I'm here to offer you a job.

HARRY

I'm going back to New York in--
(consults his watch)
Shit! I'm outta here.

VALENTIN

Have you got a job that'll pay you
five thousand a day?

A beat. Then Harry takes the chain off the door.

HARRY

Do I get lunch?

CUT TO:

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. - DAY

A white SEDAN glides along the boulevard. At the wheel,
Valentin. Beside him, Harry.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Harry is eating a burrito and sipping coffee.

HARRY

Whose is the car?

VALENTIN

Mine.

HARRY

Nah. You're driving it too
carefully.

VALENTIN

(sparring)
Maybe I just bought it.

HARRY

Somebody's been smoking in here for
months.

He pulls open the ashtray. Pulls out a cigar-butt.

HARRY

Havanas. You're not the smoker. So who is?

VALENTIN

(laughs)
You could almost pass for a detective, D'Amour.

(a beat)
I work for the best illusionist in the world.

HARRY

Philip Swann?

VALENTIN

You know of him?

HARRY

I saw him in Vegas once.

VALENTIN

Are you a gambling man?

HARRY

When I can afford to lose. Swann's quite a magician.

VALENTIN

Never call him that. He's strictly an illusionist.

HARRY

What's the difference?

VALENTIN

Illusions are trickery. Magicians do it for real.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY - GATES - DAY

The sedan turns into a driveway.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY - DAY

The sun beats down on a pristine panorama of palms and white marble tombs. Harry and Valentin walk towards a large mausoleum.

HARRY

Any movie stars buried here?

VALENTIN

Probably.

HARRY

It's not a bad place. Warm.
Great view.

VALENTIN

I don't think the dead much care.

HARRY

Are you sure?

VALENTIN

Are you a believer, then?

Valentin gives him an inquisitive look.

HARRY

I've signed on for them all in my
time. Hindu. Catholic. You can't
have too many saviours.

Harry's gaze is on the mausoleum now; or rather on the woman
in white standing in its cool shadows: Dorothea Swann. She
wears a wide-brimmed hat.

HARRY

Who is she?

VALENTIN

Swann's wife.

CUT TO:

VALENTIN sitting on the mausoleum steps reading a book. He
glances up.

Harry and Dorothea are wandering between the graves, deep in
conversation.

DOROTHEA

I want you to help me help my
husband. I know he's in some kind
of trouble. And it's something to
do with the man you saw murdered.

HARRY

Did your husband know Quaid?

DOROTHEA

Yes. They weren't close, but they
saw each other once in a while. I

think Philip believes all that stuff with the tarot cards.

HARRY

You don't?

DOROTHEA

I think we make our own futures.

Harry makes an approving MURMUR.

HARRY

What's the connection?

DOROTHEA

(covering now, but well)

I don't exactly know.

Philip doesn't like to talk about the past.

HARRY

Why not?

Dorothea stops talking. Takes off her sunglasses. Her gaze is troubled, but direct. There is an attraction between the two of them that simmers beneath the dialogue.

DOROTHEA

He's a secretive man.

HARRY

And you don't ask questions?

DOROTHEA

We don't share our lives the way a lot of people do.

HARRY

Does that mean...?

DOROTHEA

We haven't slept in the same bed for years.

HARRY

But obviously you still care what happens to him.

DOROTHEA

We wouldn't be having this conversation if I didn't. Swann's one of the most remarkable men

alive.

Harry, frowns.

DOROTHEA

You don't believe me.

HARRY

He's an illusionist. It's not exactly brain surgery.

Dorothea stares at him.

HARRY

Sorry. You asked.

DOROTHEA

No. You're right. He could have been something more. Maybe a lot more. But people get lost. Even good people. Too much fame. Too much money,

HARRY

Where do I sign?

Dorothea LAUGHS lightly.

DOROTHEA

Will you take the job, Mr. D'Amour?

HARRY

Harry.

DOROTHEA

Harry.

HARRY

I'm no bodyguard.

DOROTHEA

That's not what I'm asking for. I want somebody who can find out what Philip saw in those damn cards. And stop it from happening.

HARRY

When do you want me to start?

DOROTHEA

Come to the show with me. Tonight I want you to see him with an

audience. They love him.

HARRY

Do you?

The question catches Dorothea off guard.

DOROTHEA

I didn't marry him for love, Mr.
D'Amour. Tonight?

HARRY

Sure.

Dorothea makes a little smile, and walks away. Harry watches her go, exhaling an appreciative breath at the sight of her departing figure.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - DUSK

Harry's talking on the phone while he dresses for the theatre.

HARRY

You're not listening to me, Loomis.

CUT TO:

INT. LOOMIS' OFFICE - MEW YORK - NIGHT

LOOMIS, a slob of a man, is in his office, eating pizza.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

LOOMIS

The case is closed. Harry. Tapert's given us a full confession. Get your ass back to Mew York.

HARRY

No. I'm taking a couple of weeks' vacation.

LOOMIS

You never took a fucking vacation in your life, Harry. What's going on?

HARRY

I got to go. I'm late.

LOOMIS

Call me tomorrow.

HARRY

There's other guys as good as me,
Loomis.

LOOMIS

Yeah. But not as cheap. Call me.

HARRY

A couple of weeks.

LOOMIS

One question.

HARRY

What?

LOOMIS

Who is she?

Harry can't help but smile to himself.

LOOMIS

I thought so. 'Night, Harry.

Click. Harry puts down the phone. Glances at himself in the mirror. Raises a rueful eyebrow.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILTERN THEATRE - NIGHT

CRANE DOWN from a looming STANDEE of Swann, perched above the theatre marquee. SPOTLIGHTS rake the skies. The sidewalk below is jammed with AUDIENCE MEMBERS, STAR-SPOTTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS. This is a flashy, prestigious event. LIMOS are disgorging scantily-dressed STARLETS and smiling MONEY MEN; a NEWS TEAM is interviewing audience members as they file in.

The atmosphere is noisy and excited. Amid the throng, Harry. He makes his way inside.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The atmosphere, is closer to a rock concert than a conventional stage show. Security people with walkie-talkies roam the aisles; the audience buzzes with barely controlled hysteria.

Harry heads down the aisle, eyes on the stage. A star-lit CURTAIN covers it. Six rows from the stage is Dorothea, already in her seat. She smiles lavishly, happy to see him.

DOROTHEA

I'm glad you could make it.

Harry takes a seat beside her.

HARRY

Hey, this is a big deal for me. You know what seats like this cost in New York?

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - STAGE - NIGHT

Center-stage, behind the closed curtains, Swann is ready for the opening of the show. TECHNICIANS buzz around him like flies.

SWANN

Valentin!

Valentin emerges from the wings, patting the PANTHER that is waiting there.

SWANN

(irritated)

Valentin!

VALENTIN

I'm here.

SWANN

The guy with Dorothea. Is that who I think it is?

Valentin nods.

ON SWANN, his expression unreadable.

SWANN

He's young.

MUSIC strikes up. A dramatic, Wagnerian chord. Valentin hurries away. Swann's expression becomes very focused.

1ST TECHNICIAN

(to Swann)

Ready?

SWANN

Ready.

Swann rises up into the flies.

1ST TECHNICIAN

How the fuck does he do that?

2ND TECHNICIAN

It's wires, man.

1ST TECHNICIAN

I never seen no wires.

2ND TECHNICIAN

(sarcastic)

So what is it? Magic?

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - AUDITORIUM AND STAGE - NIGHT

The LIGHTS are DIMMING. Harry glances across at Dorothea, whose gaze is intent.

The LIGHTS go OUT. The MUSIC SWELLS, and the CURTAINS fly apart. A spectacle worthy of Siegfried and Roy is about to blast our senses! Magic for the 90's: a wild, erotic ride into mystery.

SWANN (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen. You are standing on the threshold of a miracle...

A vortex of SMOKE and LIGHT swirls in the middle of the stage.

The vortex BLAZES --

And suddenly Swann SWEEPS DOWN out of the flies, as the floor of the stage opens and the head of a glittering, razor toothed DRAGON emerges in a cloud of CRIMSON SMOKE.

Swann raises his hands above his head and a SPEAR miraculously appears in his grasp. He descends on the dragon. It's a classic image: St. Michael smiting the Devil. Swann drives the spear down the throat of the dragon. The theatre SHAKES at its dying ROARS. Then the head cracks open, and out of the dragon's mouth emerge a dozen scantily dressed DANCERS, male and female. Swann throws down the spear, and where it strikes the stage his PANTHER appears.

A ROAR of APPLAUSE from the audience. Swann's plain white

tunic falls away from him as he descends. By the time his feet touch the stage he is dressed in a star-shot TUXEDO. The PANTHER licks his hand in welcome. The MUSIC comes to a crescendo. The DANCERS freeze in their erotic dance. In the sudden hush, Swann speaks in a whisper.

SWANN

My friends ... come with me...into
the Great Beyond.

A barrage of LIGHTS and MUSIC erupt.

The AUDIENCE APPLAUDS wildly.

ON HARRY and Dorothea.

HARRY

He's good.

DOROTHEA

You haven't seen anything yet.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - LOBBY - NIGHT

The doors SQUEAK as a gust of WIND blows through them.

Butterfield stands in the lobby, listening to the muted SOUNDS of MUSIC and APPLAUSE. Then he offers his ticket to the TICKET-COLLECTOR and steps inside.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - AUDITORIUM AND STAGE - NIGHT

A new musical motif hangs in the air: MUSIC announcing danger.

The AUDIENCE watches intently, nervously.

ON HARRY and DOROTHEA.

DOROTHEA

(a whisper)

This is the new illusion.

ON STAGE, Swann is bound to a spinning WHEEL, while the DANCERS, dressed like Boschian DEMONS, cavort around him, somersaulting and leaping over eruptions of yellow FLAME. It's a scene from Daniels Inferno. Above him, a dozen glittering SWORDS - six feet long - are descending. He struggles to free himself. The MUSIC gets more exciting as the wheel spins faster and faster.

Suddenly, a sword DROPS. It falls between Swann's

outstretched legs, skewering the wheel. Then ANOTHER, close to his head.

ON HARRY. He's tense. Excited.

BACK TO STAGE. Swann is free I He throws off the last shackle and uses it to thrust into the mechanism of the wheel. There's a theatrical BLAZE of white-hot SPARKS.

The wheel slows. He starts to step off it, as another of the the swords DROPS.

The AUDIENCE GASPS. Swann smiles, and TRIPS.

As he FALLS, the sword runs through the middle of his back, carrying him down to the still-spinning wheel, and pinning him there. Some of the DANCERS continue to cavort. Some stop.

More GASPS from the audience.

ON HARRY, having a --

FLASHBACK: Harry's hand turns over the final tar of card. The scene on the stage is that image coming to life.

HARRY

There's something wrong...

ON Swann, as a second sword FALLS, skewering his thigh, and a third, running through his buttock, and a fourth and fifth, until TEN SWORDS have entered his body.

ON THE AUDIENCE, not certain whether this is a trick or not.

The MUSIC has stopped. In the silence, somebody GIGGLES nervously. A couple of PEOPLE break into APPLAUSE, but it dies away in a matter of moments.

ON DOROTHEA AND HARRY

DOROTHEA

No. . .

ON THE STAGE, Swann raises his head and looks out at his wife, his eyes already glassy with imminent death. He reaches out towards her, and then sags on the wheel, dead.

There are GASPS now from the audience. Murmurs of disgust; sobs of horror.

1ST AUDIENCE MEMBER

What happened?

2ND AUDIENCE MEMBER

It's a trick.

3RD AUDIENCE MEMBER

Somebody help him.

The curtains start to close.

ON Dorothea, tears of shock filling her eyes.

DOROTHEA

(to Harry)

I've got to get to him!

The AUDIENCE is rising now, as the horror of what they've seen sinks in. There is panic. A few people have fainted. One or two are even praying.

Harry carves out a path down to the stage for Dorothea against the flood of the exiting crowd.

HARRY

Out of the way! Out of the way!

He helps Dorothea onto the stage, and lifts the curtain so she can duck beneath it.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - STAGE - NIGHT

Chaos. PEOPLE running, sobbing, puking; some simply standing watching. Valentin is already at the body, with the STAGE MANAGER at his side.

VALENTIN

(to Stage Manager)

Get then out of here, for God's sake --

STAGE MANAGER

You heard him! It's not a fucking show!

He starts to physically push the crowd back. Harry grabs his arm.

STAGE MANAGER

Who are you?

Harry uses his grip to gently but efficiently move the STAGE MANAGER out of Dorothea's way. She goes to Swann's body,

which has been removed from the wheel.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The audience is clearing now. But Butterfield is coming towards the stage, with an ambiguous look on his face. Is he enraged? Or puzzled? Or both?

MILLER

Psst!

Miller stands at an open door, leading below the stage.

Butterfield enters.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - STAGE - NIGHT

Dorothea kneels at Swann's side. A few yards from her, Harry examines the mechanism of the wheel.

DOROTHEA

(softly)

Swann...

A DOCTOR appears.

DOCTOR

I'm a doctor. Let me through.

The Doctor checks Swann's body.

DOCTOR

(to Dorothea)

I'm sorry...

Harry has discovered a CABLE snaking down beside the device. He's suspicious. He slips round to the back of the mechanism, and climbs down beneath the stage, tracing the cable as he goes.

WILTERN THEATRE - BELOW STAGE - NIGHT

It's an eerie, shadowy space, filled with the PROPS that are used in the show, including the DRAGON we saw at the beginning. From above we hear FOOTSTEPS and VOICES, muted and echoing.

The cable ends in bare wires. Whatever was here has been taken.

A NOISE, behind Harry. He swings round. Sees a shadowy FIGURE ducking away.

HARRY

Hey!

He gives chase. Loses the man in the shadows. Stops and listens for movement.

Suddenly, Miller steps out of the shadows with a plank of wood and smashes it into Harry's face!

Harry reels back. Falls to his knees, BLOOD running from his nose. Miller pulls Harry's GUN out of his jacket.

MILLER

Got you, fucker!

Harry is facing the dragon's head, dazed. And now, out of the dragon's mouth, comes Butterfield.

BUTTERFIELD

Who did this, D'Amour? Who killed Swann?

Harry is barely holding on to consciousness.

HARRY

You did.

(a beat)

Didn't you?

BUTTERFIELD

Why would I do that?

HARRY

Beats me.

Butterfield is a foot from Harry now.

BUTTERFIELD

You don't have a clue what you're into, do you?

HARRY

Deep shit?

Butterfield hits him.

BUTTERFIELD

Who did this?

HARRY

I told you --

Butterfield hits him again.

BUTTERFIELD

Who did this?

HARRY

(raises his hand)

All right. It was...

Butterfield comes a little closer.

HARRY

(feigning a near collapse)

... it was...

Butterfield leans in. And Harry grabs him by the balls -- literally -- rising as he does so.

BUTTERFIELD

Aah!

Harry THROWS Butterfield aside. Butterfield hits the ground in agony, and Harry swings round to protect himself from Miller, who's leveling Harry's gun.

He FIRES once, missing Harry by inches. Harry catches hold of a ROPE underfoot and pulls it, tripping Miller, who TOPPLES backwards into the mouth of the dragon. The GUN GOES OFF again, the bullet BLOWING APART the dragon's JAW **MECHANISM.**

Miller starts to sit up, his body splayed between the dragon's steel teeth. He has Harry in his sights.

-- something CREAKS. He looks up. The dragon's jaw is closing, FAST. He starts to scramble to his feet. Too late! The teeth SLAM CLOSED on his body. Sudden death.

Harry looks round to see Butterfield retreating into the shadows. Then he's gone. Harry looks down at Miller's BLOOD, which is pooling around his feet.

HARRY

Deep shit...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. POLICE STATION - EDDISON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Harry sits at Eddison's desk, looking exhausted and bruised. Eddison has just finished taking his statement.

EDDISON

And this Butterfield guy--

HARRY

--vanished.

EDDISON

(frustrated sigh)

Another fucking magician. Jesus.

Harry looks past Eddison and sees an ashen, tearful Dorothea being taken into another office.

HARRY

Are you finished with me?

EDDISON

For now. Are you planning to go back to New York?

HARRY

(watching Dorothea)

No. Not yet...

INT. POLICE STATION - OTHER OFFICE - NIGHT

Dorothea sits alone, staring at the wall. Harry enters.

HARRY

Are they treating you okay?

DOROTHEA

(nods)

I heard what happened. It looks like somebody murdered him.

HARRY

I'm sorry I got into this too late. But if you want me to stick around, maybe dig where the cops don't look...

DOROTHEA

I don't know where you'd start.

HARRY

Well... how about some of the other illusionists?

DOROTHEA

They won't tell you anything.

HARRY

I can be very persuasive.

DOROTHEA

(a beat)

Yes. I think you probably can.

(another beat)

We'd need to talk about your fee.

HARRY

Forget the fee. If I find
Butterfield, maybe we'll talk about
money. If I don't...

(he shrugs)

...my gamble. Either way... I
get to spend some time... here.

The way he says this, it's plain "here" doesn't mean L.A., it means near -Dorothea. And by the tiny smile on her face, it's also plain she knows it.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGIC SHOP - HOLLYWOOD BLVD. - DAY

Noon. Bright sun. Busy street. Harry, now wearing a bandage on his cut face, enters.

INT. MAGIC SHOP - DAY

A wonderland for illusionists. Books, props, masks, tricks, etc. Two or three CUSTOMERS browse. Harry glances at them all, then targets a MAN in late middle age, who is browsing through books, one-handed. His other hand constantly manipulates a card, concealing and revealing it in a dozen ways. He doesn't even look at his hand. His name is **WALTER WILDER**.

Harry stands beside him. Scans the shelf.

HARRY

Where'd you learn that?

WILDER

What?

HARRY

(points)

That.

WILDER

At birth. I don't know you --

HARRY

Harry D'Amour.

WILDER

I know all the kids coming up. Got to stay ahead of the game. But I don't know you.

HARRY

I'm in from New York. I came to see Swann.

WILDER

What a tragedy. It was just a matter of time, of course, but it's not good for the business.

HARRY

Was he taking a lot of risks?

WILDER

You don't know the half of it. I'm Walter Wilder, by the way.

HARRY

Not the Walter Wilder?

Walter beams.

WILDER

The one and only.

He hands Harry a card.

WILDER

Want to try?

Harry tries to emulate Wilder's card manipulation through the rest of this conversation.

WILDER

You know Vinovich?

HARRY

(not a clue)
Sure. Vivovich.

WILDER

He knew Swann way back. He says there were a lot of drugs, a lot of crazy shit.

HARRY

I'd love to... you know... hang with some of you guys.

WILDER

People are pretty cagey. Who do you know?

HARRY

For what?

WILDER

For an introduction.

HARRY

Well... nobody.

Wilder takes a moment to assess Harry, who is attempting to manipulate the card he's been given with charming ineptitude.

WILDER

(magnanimously)

You do now.

EXT. MAGIC CASTLE - DUSK

The castle is faux, of course, but it has a Gothic charm.

Harry and Walter wander towards the front door. Harry is knotting a newly-bought tie.

HARRY

I only wear ties for funerals.

WILDER

You don't get in without one. It's like a gentlemen's club for illusionists. Except most of us aren't gentlemen.

INT. MAGIC CASTLE - CORRIDORS - NIGHT

The interior is murky and atmospheric, the walls covered with illusionists' posters.

Walter leads the way through the long corridors, past rooms where illusionists are performing close-up magic for audiences of well-heeled patrons. Walter nods and waves to

half a dozen people on their way through the house, up the stairs and towards the bar.

HARRY

Are they all in the business?

WILDER

It's not a business. Harry. It's a vocation.

Wilder points to a locked door.

WILDER

That's what they call the Repository. Every magic secret known to man's locked up in that room.

HARRY

Have you been in?

WILDER

No. There's only three keys. Vinovich has got one, of course.

(beat)

He's a little crazy, by the way. And he's a mean drunk. Otherwise, he's a real charmer.

CUT TO

INT. MAGIC CASTLE - BAR - NIGHT

Later. A drunken VINOVICH is holding court. He's in his 40's: a flamboyant and loquacious man with a heavy (and fake) middle-European accent. At the table - besides Harry and Walter - are: Vinovich's starlet/nymphet girlfriend LAURA; an Asian-American illusionist called BILLY WHO; and two of Vinovich's adoring courtiers, an overblown, overdressed female illusionist - DEBRA DEVINE - and a thin, waspish fellow in a spangly suit: the AMAZING QUENTIN.

In the conversation that follows we go back to Harry repeatedly as he studies this extraordinary group.

VINOVICH

It's more than entertainment. We're opening people's heads up. Putting miracles back into their boring little lives.

BILLY

But they're fake miracles.

VINOVICH

Houdini believed he had spirit guides.

HARRY

You believe that?

VINOVICH

I think we walk a narrow path, between... between...

HARRY

Heaven and Hell?

Vinovich stares hard at Harry, trying to figure out whether he's being sarcastic or not.

VINOVICH

Trickery and divinity.

HARRY

Are you saying that sometimes the miracles are real?

VINOVICH

No. I'm saying they were always fake. The saints, the messiahs, they were just illusionists.

HARRY

So could you walk on water?

VINOVICH

(deadly serious)

I could reproduce any miracle that's ever been performed, with a little preparation.

HARRY

What about Swann's miracles?

The smug smile on Vinovich's face dies. Furtive glances are exchanged around the table. Only Billy Who makes a tiny smile.

VINOVICH

They weren't worth a damn.

HARRY

(goadng)
I heard he was the best.

VINOVICH

If he was so good why's he so dead?

Vinovich begins to look suspicious.

HARRY

You tell me. No? I thought you'd
maybe have a theory.

VINOVICH

Oh, I've got plenty.

HARRY

I'd like to hear them.

Vinovich rises.

VINOVICH

I'm not saying another word.
(to Wilder)
You damn fool. He's a
journalist.

HARRY

Just tell me about Swann. Or are
you too scared?

VINOVICH

He was a freak. Everything he did
was tainted.

Harry rises. Looks straight at Vinovich, unintimidated.

HARRY

With what?

VINOVICH

Evil. He was evil.
(to Laura)
Come on.

She rises.

VINOVICH

(to the rest)
Say nothing to this man if you wish
to keep my company.

He stalks away. Harry calls after him, across a now-

silenced bar.

HARRY

Great accent, by the way. Is it
Brooklyn?

VINOVICH

(pure Brooklyn)
Fuck you.

EXT. MAGIC CASTLE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Harry heads to the car.

BILLY (V.O.)

Harry!

Harry turns. Billy approaches, glancing behind him to see
that he's not being watched.

BILLY

I gotta be careful. If Vinovich
sees me talking to you. He's an
asshole, but he's a powerful
asshole.

HARRY

They go together.

BILLY

(lowered voice)
I've heard a name. Someone they
talk about in whispers.

HARRY

Who?

BILLY

Nix.

HARRY

Nix?

BILLY

Like in nothing. Nobody. Nix.

HARRY

Who is he?

BILLY

I think maybe he taught Swann.
(hands Harry a card)

This is me. See ya around.

Billy hurries away.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Harry lies on his bed, dozing. The CAMERA CREEPS IN on him.

DOROTHEA (V.O.)

... I want somebody who can find
out what Philip saw in those damn
cards...

Harry frowns in his semi-doze.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - QUAID'S ROOM

BUTTERFIELD

Ever watched a man die?

The image darkens, and fades up a beat later on Quaid.

QUAID

Please... I wasn't there... Ask
Pimm.

BUTTERFIELD

Pimm's dead. Jennifer Desiderio's
disappeared...

BACK TO:

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Harry is still asleep.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - QUAID'S ROOM

QUAID

I'm not afraid to die. There's
something terrible... coming
home...

A long silence.

SUDDENLY, a telephone RINGS.

BACK TO:

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

HARRY sits up, shocked awake.

HARRY

Shit!

He picks up the receiver.

HARRY

This is D'Amour.

CUT TO:

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - DOROTHEA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She sits up on her bed, dressed in a silk robe, and nothing else, drinking a SCOTCH, talking on the phone. The primary source of illumination is the massive T.V. set in the wall opposite the bed.

DOROTHEA

Harry... I know it's late.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

There should be a subtle eroticism pervading this exchange. Both of them on beds, in different bedrooms. Each aroused by the other's voice, and frustrated not to be able to see and touch them.

HARRY

That's okay.

As he speaks, Harry scrawls Jennifer Desiderio on the title page of the Gideon's Bible beside the bed.

DOROTHEA

How did it go today?

HARRY

I went up to the Magic Castle. You were right. He didn't have a lot of fans up there.

CUT TO:

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Valentin, on the kitchen PHONE, is listening in.

DOROTHEA (V.O.)

They were jealous of him.

HARRY (V.O.)

Why? Because he had you?

BACK TO:

INTERCUTTING: HARRY - DOROTHEA - VALENTIN

DOROTHEA

He... didn't have me.. I told you-

HARRY

You didn't marry him for love.

DOROTHEA'S BEDROOM

She's a little uncomfortable now.

HARRY

So why did you marry him?

DOROTHEA

That's my business. Harry.

HARRY

Just curious.

(a beat)

Back to business. Ever heard of a man called Nix?

(silence)

Dorothea?

DOROTHEA

Yes... I'm here. And no. I don't know the name.

HARRY

What about Jennifer Desiderio?

DOROTHEA

It doesn't ring a bell. I have to go.

HARRY

Okay. I'll keep digging.

DOROTHEA

(uneasy)
Yes. You do that.

She puts down the phone, and swallows a mouthful of scotch. She's shaking. She gets up. Paces the room. Then she picks up the phone again.

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

On the pad beside the bed, Jennifer's name, surrounded by Harry's doodles. The phone RINGS.

CUT WIDE: The room is empty.

EXT./INT. QUAID'S OFFICES - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

The Tarot Card and Crystal Readings sign is dark now. Harry heads up the stairs, past the PHOTOGRAPHS, to the door of Quaid's Waiting Room.

It has been locked and taped by the police. Harry has come prepared. He takes out a small crowbar and levers off the locks.

INT. QUAID'S OFFICES - WAITING/FORTUNE TELLING ROOMS - NIGHT

Harry enters, FLASHLIGHT on. He crosses the Waiting Room and enters the Fortune-Telling Room where Quaid died. On the TRACK -- a remote, eerie presence -- we hear Quaid's SOBS, Miller's SHOUTS, and, as Harry's flashlight illuminates the blood-spattered table:

BUTTERFIELD (V.O.)

If you watch very closely, you can
sometimes see the soul escaping.

Harry is spooked. He starts to search the room, opening cabinets and drawers. Quaid's hordes of mystical bric-a-brac are stashed everywhere. Boxes of crystals, religious statues, elaborate cards, incense, etc.

He pulls open a drawer, and notices that a rosary is wedged in a niche at the base of the drawer. He pulls the drawer out, empties its contents on the table, and examines it.

Using the crowbar, he forces the drawer apart. It has a false bottom.

HARRY

(smiles)
Yes...

In the secret compartment, some papers and an address book.

He flicks to "D."

HARRY (CONT'D)

Desiderio...

There it is. Jennifer Desiderio, and an address. He pockets the book. Then, sensing a presence behind him, he pulls out his gun and whirls around, his flashlight beam revealing --

-- Valentin!

HARRY (CONT'D)

What the fuck are you doing here?

VALENTIN

Looking for you. I tried the hotel.

HARRY

Why'd you come here?

VALENTIN

You're a detective, with no clues. Where else are you going to look? I'm going to keep this brief.
(he takes out an envelope)
Here's thirty thousand dollars.

HARRY

What for?

VALENTIN

A ticket home,

HARRY

You didn't hire me. She did. If she wants me off the job, I want to hear it from her.

VALENTIN

She doesn't want to see you. She's had enough pain. Enough churning over the past. She wants it all left alone.

HARRY

Left alone? Somebody's been murdered.

VALENTIN

Yes. It's regrettable

HARRY

Fuck regrettable! I want to know why.

VALENTIN

What for? You need to stay busy?

HARRY

(a confession)
I like to know why things happen.

VALENTIN

Why people die?
(shakes his head)
Give it up, D'Amour. Go home.

HARRY

No.

Harry crosses to the door, brushing past Valentin.

VALENTIN

Don't try and see her, D'Amour.
Just leave her alone. Let her
heal.

He glances back at Valentin.

HARRY

Lock up, will you?

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. LUKE'S SANITORIUM, PASADENA - DAY

ON THE ADDRESS BOOK, in Harry's hands.

Harry looks up - with some surprise - not at a house but at a building, the sign on which reads, "St. Luke's Sanitorium".

INT. ST. LUKE'S SANITORIUM - DAY

The place is bland and functional throughout, the walls decorated with sun-faded reproductions of great paintings. Nothing disturbing. Harry is talking to D.A. TOFFLER - black, fortyish, softly spoken - and a Nurse.

TOFFLER

Jennifer's only ever had one visitor.

HARRY

A Mister Quaid?

TOFFLER

Right. And he's dead, isn't he? I saw it on the news. Jennifer doesn't know. And frankly, this isn't the best time for her to be told.

HARRY

I won't say anything.

INT. ST. LUKE'S SANITORIUM - CORRIDORS AND WARD - DAY

Toffler escorts Harry through -the place. There are distressing scenes on every side. Nothing melodramatic no screaming, no fits. Just a subtle, pervasive air of despair. Blank, empty FACES in blank, empty rooms.

TOFFLER

Jennifer's been with us four years. She was coming on nicely. But just the last month or so, she's worse than ever.

HARRY

What's her problem?

TOFFLER

She has no real grip on reality.

HARRY

(a joke)
Does anybody?

TOFFLER

(deadly serious)
Oh yes. We have to agree what's real and what's not. That's what holds us together.

HARRY

And what does Jennifer think's real?

They've come to french windows, which are wide open. Sitting outside in the sun is Jennifer, with her back to us.

TOFFLER

(quietly)
Jennifer thinks the Devil's coming for her.

(louder)
Jennifer?

Jennifer turns. She looks terrible.

EXT. ST. LUKE'S SANITORIUM - GROUNDS - CITY STREET - DAY

Harry and Jennifer walk amongst the flower-beds, with the Nurse keeping a watch from a discreet distance. Throughout the scene we HEAR the SOUND of earth being dug, which steadily gets louder as they walk.

JENNIFER

Have we met before?

HARRY

No.

JENNIFER

Only I forget. They give me pills,
you know, to keep me... even...
and... I forget things,

HARRY

Well, you didn't forget me. I just
came because I wanted to know if
you knew a man called Butterfield.

JENNIFER

Maybe... I... don't...

HARRY

What about Philip Swann?

JENNIFER

I knew Swann.
(sudden vehemence)
He's a fucking liar.

A WORKMAN saunters past, carrying pipes.

HARRY

Why's that?

JENNIFER

He said he knew how to protect us.
But he didn't know anything. He
made us think it was over and done
with.

HARRY

What is?

JENNIFER

(tears nearing)
I don't want to think about it. If
I think about it he'll hear me.
He'll find me.

HARRY

Swann?

Ahead now, the site where the workmen are digging a hole,
laying pipes. The CAMERA doesn't focus on this action, but
we're aware of it.

JENNIFER

I told you. I don't --

She stops. Looks ahead of her. Her face is suddenly ashen
and clammy. Harry follows her gaze to:

The hole. Somebody is in it, digging. Earth emerges in
shovelfuls, piling up beside the hole.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

(screaming)
God no! Oh God no!

She backs away from the hole. The Nurse grabs hold of her.

NURSE

Calm down!

She delivers the Nurse a backhand SWIPE. The Nurse is flung
back.

JENNIFER

He's not going to get me!

She races down towards the street. Harry goes after her.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

He's not! He's not!

HARRY

Who's not?

He catches up with her.

JENNIFER

Nix! Nix!

HARRY

Is he the Puritan?

JENNIFER

Yes! Yes!

HARRY

And he's dead?

JENNIFER

No. He's coming back. He's digging his way out!

The Nurse appears behind Harry.

NURSE

I'll take care of her now.

Jennifer struggles in Harry's grip.

NURSE

Let go of her, Mr. D'Amour!

The Nurse breaks Harry's hold on Jennifer, who slips away instantly, racing towards the street.

HARRY

Jennifer!

She scrambles up over a wall, and flings herself from the top. There's a SCREECH of brakes, then the smashing of metalwork and glass. Harry gets to the wall before the Nurse. Hoists himself up onto it. Looks down.

HARRY'S P.O.V. OF STREET

Jennifer is dead in the middle of the street, beneath the wheels of a car. The DRIVER is out, and yelling incoherently.

HARRY

Jesus.

He slips back down the wall, and leans against it.

He looks towards the hole. The Workman has stopped digging. His mud-encrusted hands emerge, and for a moment, before his head appears, the image is eerily like somebody climbing from a grave. Harry closes his eyes.

HARRY

(very quietly)

Jesus.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DUSK

The sun is setting, the city giving way to night.

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - DUSK

Harry's on the phone.

HARRY

I want to speak to Dorothea.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

I'm afraid she's not in.

HARRY

When will she be in?

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - STUDY - NIGHT

Valentin on the phone in the study.

DOROTHEA

Who is it?

Valentin puts the phone down.

VALENTIN

Crank call. I'll get the number changed.

DOROTHEA

No word from D'Amour?

Valentin shakes his head.

VALENTIN

It's better he's gone. He would have done more harm than good.

DOROTHEA

Harm to whom? Me? I don't think, so. Try him again at the hotel.

VALENTIN

I left three messages already.

Dorothea nods, plainly sad at Harry's desertion. She turns and leaves the room.

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

ON BILLY WHO'S CARD, in Harry's hand.

HARRY

(on phone)

Billy? It's Harry. Suppose I
wanted to get into the repository
at the Magic Castle?

CUT TO:

INT. MAGIC CASTLE - SKYLIGHT ROOM - NIGHT

THE PLACE IS EERIE BY NIGHT: ALL MASKS AND SHADOWS.

**PAN UP TO THE SKYLIGHT. HARRY IS CUTTING AWAY A PANE OF
GLASS. BILLY'S BEHIND HIM. THE PANE STARTS TO FALL. WITH
LIGHTNING REFLEXES, BILLY REACHES THROUGH AND CATCHES IT.**

HARRY

You've done this before.

BILLY

I've had my moments.

INT. MAGIC CASTLE - HALLWAY OUTSIDE REPOSITORY - NIGHT

Harry's manipulating the lock.

BILLY

I'm sure they'll have this place
rigged.

HARRY

How?

BILLY

It'll be something hokey.

CLICK! The door opens.

BILLY

Houdini'd been proud of you.

INT. MAGIC CASTLE - REPOSITORY - NIGHT

Undusted shelves piled high with manuscripts, old books, and
posters in every direction.

BILLY

(impressed)

Whoa...

On the wall, plaster LIFE-MASKS. In glass cases, the tools of the great magicians: KNIVES, KEYS, GUNS, WANDS, even an IRON MAIDEN. Billy is in awe. He wanders around wide-eyed while Harry scans the shelves. The dialogue runs as they investigate.

BILLY

I hear Mrs. Swann's quite a babe.

HARRY

You heard right.

BILLY

You ever been married?

HARRY

Yeah. She was killed in a car crash. Her lawyer was driving. She was filing for divorce.

BILLY

Why?

HARRY

My life was too weird for her.

BILLY

(grinning)

I love weird.

Harry has seen a small SIGIL carved onto one of the shelves.

HARRY

Billy? This was on Miller's forehead. Any idea what it is?

BILLY

Nope.

Harry presses it. The entire bookcase opens up, CREAKING.

BILLY

What did I tell you? So fucking hokey.

Inside, there is a small shelf. On it, FILES and PAPERS.

HARRY

What have we got here?

Ever-eager, Billy steps into the recess. And --

two spiked, latticed gates close on his arm!

Harry grabs the gates before they snap closed, inches from skewering Billy's flesh and bone! He keeps them open, his sinews straining.

HARRY

Grab the files!

Billy reaches in and pulls out a handful of the files. As he steps out of range. Harry lets go and the gates close with a **CLANG!**

BILLY

Jesus!

He slams the files down. He's trembling.

BILLY

I could have lost my fucking hands.

HARRY

That would have kept you out of the Magic Circle.

(he studies the files)

Which was presumably the idea.

(a beat)

These are about Nix.

Harry takes a sheaf of papers, and hands them to Billy.

HARRY

You go through these. Go on!

Reluctantly, Billy does so. Harry picks up a faded PHOTOGRAPH of the doorway to Nix's HOUSE (with the sigil painted on it) and BUTTERFIELD the child standing in the sun. There are other CULTISTS standing around. And in the DOORWAY -- a barely visible figure (and all the more intimidating for that) - is NIX.

HARRY

Wait a minute...

He stares at the boy's face. The eyes are clearly different colours.

HARRY

That's Butterfield...

BILLY

(points to nan in)
doorway)
And who's that?

ON HARRY, staring at the ambiguous presence.

ON THE PHOTOGRAPH of the shadowy figure.

HARRY

At a guess? The Puritan. Nix.

Billy picks up an ETCHING, water-stained and dirty. It shows a horror we recognize: a man's HAND pressed into the FLESH of another man's HEAD.

BILLY

Take a look at this.

HARRY

(looking at it)
A Nix specialty?

Billy is getting subtly spooked now. He puts the etching down and starts to go through others in the series. We glimpse them as he does so. In one, a MAN regurgitates a serpentine form made of FLAME. In another, a MAN stares at his own HAND which is STRIPPED OF FLESH. There is no bone beneath. Only a form of solid blackness. In a third, we see a HEAD with a slit in the middle of the brow, emanating **DARKNESS**.

BILLY

I don't know any of these tricks...

Harry studies the etchings.

HARRY

(a slow burn)
Maybe they're not tricks.

BILLY

(mystified)
I mean, there's no instructions--
(realizes what Harry said)
What do you mean, they're not
tricks?

HARRY

What did Vinovich say? Something
about walking a path between --

BILLY

Trickery and divinity. Yeah, he says that all the time.

HARRY

That's because he knew. He'd seen these files and knew.

BILLY

Knew what?

Out of the corner of his eye. Harry sees a motion between the book-stacks. Billy frowns. Harry puts his fingers to his lips. Gestures for Billy to take cover. Billy backs away. Harry slowly turns in the direction of the motion.

Something eerily sepulchral is gliding between the stacks. A figure in a straight-jacket with his head bowed.

Harry takes out his gun.

Billy disappears around the back of one of the stacks. Harry goes after the apparition.

The TRACK is completely silent.

Suddenly, the creature appears behind Billy! It looks up, its face that of a psychotic: burning eyes, manic smile.

It tears open its straight-jacket and reaches for Billy, who backs away.

BILLY

Harry!

Books tumble on top of Billy as he stumbles against the shelves.

BILLY

Where the fuck are you?

Harry appears, and puts his gun to the PSYCHO'S head.

HARRY

Okay. Hold it right there.

The gun goes through the Psycho's skull, as though it's made of smoke.

Harry waves his hands through it. It's completely ethereal.

But it's still terrorizing Billy.

BILLY

(in mortal terror)
Get it off me!

Harry glances around. Sees a LIGHT flickering between some books. FIRES at it. The light goes out. The "Psycho" vanishes. Billy is left hyper-ventilating on the ground.

HARRY

Hokey enough for you?

BILLY

I'm out of here, man! Are you coming?

Harry picks up a handful of papers from the Nix file.

HARRY

I'm coming.

Billy is already out of the room. For a moment. Harry pauses to look back at the other files, sealed behind the spiked gates.

As he does so --

-- the projector sparks into life one last time, and the "Psycho" appears --ROARING - at Harry's shoulder.

HARRY

Ah, shaddup!

He FIRES at the projector a second time.

On the GUN SHOT --

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGIC CASTLE - NIGHT

Billy and Harry are parting.

HARRY

Thanks, Billy.

BILLY

Hey, anytime.

(a beat)

Actually, no. This was enough.

They shake, and part.

EXT. SWANN'S MANSION - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Harry waits on the doorstep. Valentin opens the door.

VALENTIN

(quietly)
I can't let you in.

HARRY

(stepping in)
Yeah, I know.

VALENTIN

You want more money, is that it?

Harry pushes him aside.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - VARIOUS - NIGHT

Harry starts to go through the house, opening doors.

HARRY

Dorothea?

He sees candle-light through a partially open door. Starts towards it.

VALENTIN

Leave her alone --

HARRY

Shut up!

He pushes open the door.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - CASKET ROOM - NIGHT

The room is a museum of Swann's career. Posters, and memorabilia everywhere. And in the middle of the room, Swann's sealed CASKET, surrounded by flowers and candles. Dorothea is standing beside it, head bowed.

DOROTHEA

This is the way he wanted it... no autopsy, no embalming. Nobody meddling with his body...

Harry approaches, slowly.

DOROTHEA

Flesh is a trap. That's what he

used to say. Flesh is a trap and
magic sets us free.

(a beat)

Why did you come back?

HARRY

I didn't leave. I was just digging
around.

Dorothea looks up at him.

DOROTHEA

(uneasy)

What did you find?

HARRY

Jennifer Desiderio, for one.

(he watches her for a
response)

She threw herself in front of a car
this afternoon.

Dorothea can't disguise her distress.

DOROTHEA

Oh Christ.

HARRY

(a beat)

Why don't you tell me the truth?

INT. SWANN'S MANSION- STUDY-- NIGHT-

Dorothea pours herself a drink, while Harry spreads the
PHOTOS and the PAPERS from the repository on the table.

HARRY

Nix ran some kind of cult, right?
Some kind of Charlie Manson deal?

DOROTHEA

It was more than that, I think.

HARRY

He was the real thing, right?

DOROTHEA

Swann said he could do stuff, yes.

HARRY

Stuff?

DOROTHEA

He could get into people's heads.
Make them see things. Terrible
things. And he could levitate.
Juggle fire.

HARRY

He taught all this to Swann?

DOROTHEA

Some or it.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - HALLWAY OUTSIDE STUDY - NIGHT

Valentin is listening at the door.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION- STUDY-- NIGHT-

HARRY

So Swann was performing magic. not
illusions?

(Dorothea nods)

And what? You thought he should be
using it to cure cancer, not making
millions.

DOROTHEA

I told you --

HARRY

Too much fame. Yeah, I guess
that'd turn anybody's head.
Including yours.

DOROTHEA

No.

HARRY

You said you weren't with him for
love.

DOROTHEA

I wasn't.

HARRY

What then?

DOROTHEA

I was grateful to him. I owed him
my life. And he loved me. He
couldn't always show it, but he
felt it.

HARRY

He thought Nix was coming back,
didn't he?

Dorothea is pouring herself another drink. The glass slips from her hand. It SHATTERS. Harry goes to help her. They stoop together, very close. The sexual attraction is almost palpable. Dorothea cuts herself on a shard of glass.

DOROTHEA

Shit!

They are very close to each other.

HARRY

(reassuring)
It's okay.

DOROTHEA

No it isn't. You can't help me.

HARRY

(tenderly)
I'm here, aren't I?

He kisses her. She kisses him back, hard.

HARRY

Nothing's going to happen to you.

DOROTHEA

(seductive)
Nothing?

HARRY

(smiles)
Nothing you don't want.

They kiss again, passionately.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - LOBBY - NIGHT

Valentin breaks into the shadows, as Harry and Dorothea cross the darkened lobby and head upstairs. Then Valentin crosses to the phone and dials.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - DOROTHEA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A room of illusions. Walls lined with mirrors, and warm, flattering lighting, bathing the naked forms of Dorothea and Harry as they make love, sitting on the floor.

It is a deeply passionate, but slow, sensual coupling.

INT./EXT. SWANN'S MANSION - LOBBY - NIGHT

Valentin opens the front door. There's a wind blowing. The palms churn against the night sky...

INTERCUT

Roiling, wind-filled pains with the glistening, urgent bodies of Harry and Dorothea.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - DOROTHEA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Harry cradles Dorothea in post-coital languor.

DOROTHEA

(whispers)
I was so afraid.

HARRY

Don't be. Nix can't hurt you now.

DOROTHEA

Are you sure?

HARRY

I'm sure.
(kisses her)
He's dead.

DOROTHEA

I know. I'm the one who shot him.

ON HARRY. He's startled, to say the least.

DOROTHEA

I was twelve. Nix took me hostage, to get Swann to come to him.

HARRY

(realizing)
And they all came...

DOROTHEA

Yes.

HARRY

Quaid and Jennifer--

DOROTHEA

And Pimm and Swann. Only Nix was ready for them.

There's a NOISE downstairs.

DOROTHEA

(nervous)
What was that?

HARRY

It's okay.

Harry slips out of bed.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - STAIRS - LOBBY - NIGHT

Harry descends the stairs, buttoning up his trousers (which is all he wears). He has his gun.

HARRY

Valentin?

Dorothea appears behind him.

DOROTHEA

Harry? Wait!

Harry's at the bottom of the stairs now. Across the hall, in a passageway, an eerie SILHOUETTE. We can make out no detail of clothing or face.

HARRY

What the hell-?

Suddenly, the shadowy FIGURE comes at Harry. A BLAST of ENERGY bursts against Harry's face. As it breaks against his skin, we see (for three frames or so) a glimpse of Harry's skull.

HARRY

(in pain)
Aah!

Harry FIRES at the figure. The shadows fold up around the Stranger like an origami puzzle. He's gone.

DOROTHEA

It's him! It's Nix!

Harry goes out into the passageway.

HARRY

Valentin! Get some lights on!

As if in reply to the command, a burst of vivid white FIRE erupts behind Harry. He swings round to see the Stranger "unfolding" out of the shadows again, defying physics and physiology to do so. The FIRE is at his feet, like a serpent writhing on the ground. It comes at Harry. Harry FIRES at it, but it comes at him faster still, rising to burn Harry's leg. He retreats, the FIRE racing after him. He makes for a door, and flings it open. He's in --

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - CASKET ROOM - NIGHT

The FIRE follows him across the ground and STRIKES his hand. Harry drops the GUN. Looks up to see the Stranger in the doorway, arm raised to will the fire-serpent on. But then, he hesitates. Harry glances round, and sees that the Stranger - whose face is still a dark smear - is staring at the CASKET.

HARRY

Somebody you know?

Dorothea appears behind the Stranger. Sees Harry, burned and sweating, cornered against the casket.

DOROTHEA

Oh my God!

The Stranger looks round. Harry snatches up the GUN, supporting his burned hand with -his good hand. Levels the gun at the Stranger. The FIRE raises its head, like a cobra.

HARRY

Which goes first? My face or
your heart?

The Stranger draws a deep breath. The Fire-Serpent withers and dies.

DOROTHEA

Who in God's name are you?

She reaches for the Stranger, who simply folds up again; gone into darkness. The WIND blows through the house, masking his exit.

DOROTHEA

Are you all right?

HARRY

Find Valentin! Find him! Get him
in here!

Dorothea disappears. Harry takes one of the candle-holders
and jams it under the casket lid. Wood splinters. He starts
to force off the lid.

Valentin and Dorothea enter.

VALENTIN

What are you doing? This is
sacrilege.

He starts towards Harry. Dorothea goes after him and catches
hold of his arm. Her expression is a mingling of fascination
and dread, as Harry gets his fingers under the casket lid and
pulls.

Inside, Swann's corpse.

VALENTIN

Are you satisfied now?

HARRY

No.

Harry holds Valentin back with one hand, and puts his finger
into the corpse's mouth.

DOROTHEA

Harry?

HARRY

It's all right. It's not
hurting...

He now has four fingers in Swann's mouth and seizes hold of
his lower jaw. It cracks --

-- and comes away in a little rain of plaster and latex.

HARRY

...plaster doesn't bleed.

He tosses the jaw to Valentin.

HARRY

(to Dorothea)

It looks like you're not a widow
after all.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - STUDY - NIGHT

Harry interrogates Valentin in a white fury, while Dorothea binds Harry's hand.

HARRY

You rigged the illusion to fail,
right?

VALENTIN

Yes.

HARRY

You paid off the doctor. You set
up the fake body. Yes?

VALENTIN

Yes.

HARRY

And then... because I was
getting too close to something --
(at Dorothea)
--or someone, you called Swann

VALENTIN

I tried to pay you off.

HARRY

Was that Swann's idea?

VALENTIN

No. It was mine. I didn't want
any more bloodshed. That's why we
went to all this trouble, so
there'd be no one for Nix to come
after.

HARRY

Nix is dead and buried, for
fuck's sake.

VALENTIN

Haven't you seen enough to know
that doesn't matter?

ON HARRY. He looks as though he's beginning to think maybe
Nix's resurrection is plausible.

HARRY

I want to see Swann face to face.

VALENTIN

Why don't you leave this alone? Let everybody think it's over?

DOROTHEA

What about me?

VALENTIN

Nix was never interested in you. It was always Swann.

A beat.

HARRY

(to Dorothea)

Maybe Valentin's right. We should let it alone.

A BELL starts to TOLL-

HARRY

(con't.)

He went to all that trouble to be dead. Maybe we should let him stay that way.

The TOLLING carries over into

EXT. HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY - DAY

WE CRANE DOWN from a high angle on a GRAVE, surrounded by MOURNERS. The graveside service has just ended, and the Mourners are beginning to disperse. Dorothea is there amongst them, of course. So are several faces we recognize: Vinovich, Wilder, Billy Who, Swann's Stage Manager, his Dancers, his Technicians. There are also several members of the PRESS, and thirty or forty other Mourners, some of whom, to judge by their dress and manner, are also illusionists.

Harry stands some distance from the crowd, watching (hidden) from the doorway of a mausoleum. His eyes are on Dorothea as she goes amongst the Mourners, receiving unheard words of condolence.

EXT. WILTERN THEATRE - DAY

The standee of Swann is being demolished by two WORKERS. They are taking hammers to it, smashing it to pieces.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

The stage is starkly lit with working lights, the auditorium in darkness. Swann's equipment - including the partially

dismantled Dragon's head - is heaped on the stage.

Valentin wanders through the boxes to the place where Swann "died." He stares down at the BLOOD on the stage.

EXT. WILTERN THEATRE - DAY

THE 1st WORKER throws the cut-out head of Swann's standee down into the street.

1ST WORKER

Watch out!

On the HEAD, as it strikes the sidewalk at somebody's feet. We don't see who.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY - DAY

Harry catches sight of somebody close to the gates of the cemetery. Dark glasses, a beard, an anonymous black suit.

Harry smiles slightly, and slips off between the mausoleums.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY - PARKING LOT - DAY

The BLACK-COATED MOURNER gets into his car.

On Harry, as he gets into his.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

Valentin hears something in the auditorium. Looks up.

VALENTIN

Who's there?

He reaches into his jacket to draw a GUN. There's a NOISE. He swings round. Too late.

Butterfield has a scalpel at his throat. He kicks Valentin to the ground.

BUTTERFIELD

(conversationally)

I've sometimes thought, if I'd had another profession, I would have been a surgeon.

On Valentin, staring up in terror.

Valentin's P.O.V.- of Butterfield, upside down, above him, the scalpel glittering.

BUTTERFIELD

To be able to heal with one little cut.

On Valentin again, as Butterfield's blade touches his cheek, just beneath his eye.

VALENTIN

No. . .

BUTTERFIELD

Let's say those eyes of yours were giving you trouble.

VALENTIN

Please.

BUTTERFIELD

I could scoop them out.

VALENTIN

Don't.

BUTTERFIELD

So tell me where Nix is buried.

VALENTIN

I don't know.

Butterfield pushes the blade into Valentin's skin.

CUT WIDE, as Valentin thrashes, his face obscured by Butterfield's body.

VALENTIN

Wait!

On Valentin again. There is a small cut beneath his eye, but that's all.

VALENTIN

I'll tell you.

BUTTERFIELD

You'll do more than that.

EXT. L.A. STREET - SEMI-DERELICT BUILDING - DAY

A bad neighborhood, to judge by the state of the streets. Harry gets out of his car and crosses to a gate, topped with barbed wire. He peers through the bars.

Harry's P.O.V. of the STRANGER from the funeral disappearing into the building. He glances back towards the street. We get a glimpse of a bearded face beneath the brim of his hat.

Harry slides out of sight. Waits until the Stranger has gone inside. Then he's up, over the gate, braving the barbed wire.

INT. -SEMI-DERELICT BUILDING - DAY

It's been a hospital. Now the echoing corridors and wards are deserted, littered with reminders of old suffering. Rotting mattresses; spilled boxes of surgical supplies.

Harry explores this tiled labyrinth, looking for some sign of the Stranger.

He enters a shadowy room. Birds fly UP into his face!

As he retreats, another SOUND, a little distance from him. GUN in hand, he heads towards it, and steps into

INT. SEMI-DERELICT BUILDING - OPERATING THEATRE - DAY

Narrow shafts of light through the circular viewing window fall on an operating table, and looming pieces of discarded equipment. Eerie. Disturbing.

Harry scans the shadows as he advances into the room.

HARRY

I knew you wouldn't be able to stay away.

Silence. Harry notices the beard and glasses on the operating table.

HARRY

You had to see who wept for you the most.

Silence.

HARRY

A lot of people are going to be really pissed off when they discover you're still alive.

SWANN (V.O.)

They'll never find out.

Harry looks up.

Svanrt is hovering in the air above him. The veins in his temples bulge and throb. This trick requires a lot of concentration.

HARRY

Look, Ma, no wires.

SWANN

You shouldn't have followed me,
D'Amour.

HARRY

How the fuck do you do that?

SWANN

Now I'm going to have to kill you.

HARRY

I don't think so. You need me
alive.

SWANN

Why? So you can fuck my wife?

Swann swoops down towards Harry, who levels his gun.

HARRY

Be careful. Funerals make me
trigger-happy.

Swann stops, inches from the ground.

HARRY

You know, it's such a fucking
waste. You can do shit most of us
can only dream about, and you go
around pretending it's some trick.

SWANN

Illusionists get. Las Vegas
contracts, D'Amour. Magicians get
burned.

HARRY

Or murdered, like Nix.

SWANN

He deserved it.

HARRY

Maybe he doesn't see it that way.
Maybe he's digging his
way out of the hole you put him
right now. That's what you're
hiding away from, isn't it?

SWANN

I did it for Dorothea.

HARRY

Oh yeah?

SWANN

Now that I'm dead, the spotlight's
off her.

Harry grabs Swann, literally pulling him down to earth. Now
they're face to face. Eye to eye. Swann, for all his
posturing, is afraid.

HARRY

So Nix won't come looking for her?

SWANN

It's me betrayed him.

HARRY

And she shot him I I think that'd
piss me off if I were Nix.

SWANN

(despairing)

I don't know what else to do.

HARRY

Help me.

On Swann, his face a churning mass of rage and fear.

HARRY

Listen. If he's back from the
dead, then he is some kind of god.
And he'll find you, wherever the
fuck you are.
And if he's just another phony
Messiah, then you can stage the
greatest come-back in history.

ON Swann. This doesn't sound like such a terrible idea.

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

A car comes to a halt outside the house, where six vehicles are already gathered. The SNAKE-HANDLING Cultist gets out. SNAKES seethe out of the open car door.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - VARIOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

We MOVE THROUGH the shadowy interior, catching sight of several CULTISTS as we go. They all have looks of barely suppressed ecstasy on their faces.

We are moving towards the Sanctum, and it's getting darker. A MATCH is struck, and an OIL-FLAME sputters into life. We see NORMAN'S gleaming face. On the wall is a PICTURE of Nix, floating over a scene of apocalyptic destruction.

Norman brushes away thirteen years' accrual of DIRT. Beneath, Nix's expression is as rabid and terrifying as ever. Norman grins.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

A small, garishly-lit liquor store. Harry's car pulls into the lot. Swann gets out, his disguise back on. Heads into the store. Harry, agitated and impatient, follows him.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

Swann is at the cashier's desk, with a bottle of cheap brandy.

SWANN

Is this the best brandy you've got?

CASHIER

If that's what's on the shelves.

Swann produces a thousand dollar bill out of thin air.

SWANN

Can you change a thousand for me?

CASHIER

(amazed)
You're shittin' me.

HARRY

Can we go?

Swann starts to COUGH. A QUARTER falls from his mouth.

HARRY

Oh Jeez.

SWANN

Will that do? No?

Swann coughs again. Puts his hand to his mouth. A DELUGE of QUARTERS runs between his fingers.

SWANN

That better?

The Cashier gapes.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWANN'S MANSION - POOLSIDE - GROUNDS - DUSK

The house could not look more reassuringly calm. A SWAN struts beside the pool. A long, HUSHED MOMENT...

SHOCK CUT TO:

DOROTHEA'S DREAM

A BABOON SHRIEKS, its mouth filling the frame.

CUT WIDE, to reveal the Baboon, racing around Nix's Sanctum, crazed.

Hanging on the sculpture that swings from the roof is a shadowy figure. Is it Nix? We can't quite see. Black BLOOD runs from the figure and splashes on the ground.

NOW WE SEE DOROTHEA, being pulled by the Cultists towards the falling gouts of dark fluid --

-- she struggles, SOBBING --

CUT TO:

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - DOROTHEA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She tosses around on the bed

BACK TO:

DOROTHEA'S DREAM

-- Dorothea has a GUN in her hand. The Cultists shake it from her grip, and pull her directly under the BLOOD -- as it SPLASHES on her upturned face --

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - DOROTHEA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A SOUND. Dorothea wakes, distressed by the dream. She gets up and goes out onto --

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - LANDING - DUSK

Looks down the stairs.

DOROTHEA

Who's there?

Silence. Then, Valentin speaks behind her. She jumps.

VALENTIN

I'm sorry.

BLOOD runs from his cut face.

DOROTHEA

Jesus. Valentin. What did you do to your face?

BUTTERFIELD (V.O.)

It was me.

She turns. He's on her in a heartbeat, pressing her back against the wail.

BUTTERFIELD

Guess who we're going to see?

INT. HARRY'S CAR - DUSK

Harry drives. Swann takes a throatful of brandy. Then he stares at Harry.

SWANN

You think I'm an asshole.

HARRY

Didn't know you read minds.

SWANN

(a warning)

I can do a lot of shit, D'Amour. But you know that.

(an apology)

So I like playing games with people. Gives them something to wonder about...

HARRY

Is that all?

SWANN

I distract them from their banality for a few minutes. It's like a public service. It doesn't mean much in the end. They're all going to die.

HARRY

And you're not?

Silence for a moment.

SWANN

Oh, I was going to discover the secret of the universe. That's why I liked Nix. He promised me all these explanations.

HARRY

And he didn't have them?

SWANN

He had something. He showed me how to bend the rules. A little levitation. A few fireworks.

HARRY

Is that all?

SWANN

No.

(a beat)

At the end... when we had him cornered, he got into my head. He showed me what we really look like, when the veneer's gone. Jelly. Shit...

HARRY

And you believed him?

SWANN

I saw it with my own fucking eyes! See, that's his best trick. No illusions. Just the truth.

(he looks at Harry)

Are you ready for that?

Harry grabs the brandy bottle from Swann.

SWANN

Hey!

Harry drinks.

SWANN

Thought not.

EXT. SWANN'S MANSION - NIGHT

PAN DOWN from the palms to Harry's car, outside the front door.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - VARIOUS - NIGHT

Harry puts his head in the study, the library, the bedroom.

HARRY

Dorothea?

Now he's on the landing. Swann's below.

SWANN

She's not here.

Harry spots Valentin's BLOOD on the carpet.

HARRY

Did she know where Nix was buried?

SWANN

No.

HARRY

Who else did? Did Valentin?

SWANN

Yes.

HARRY

Jesus!

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Butterfield's SEDAN crosses the desert, under a sky full of stars.

INT. BUTTERFIELD'S SEDAN - NIGHT

Valentin drives. Butterfield and Dorothea are in the back.

Dorothea is handcuffed.

He has a bag open at his feet. One by one he takes out a series of extraordinary instruments. Dorothea looks on, confounded.

BUTTERFIELD

Like the look of these? I made them myself, to set him free.

DOROTHEA

Why did you wait so long?

BUTTERFIELD

I didn't have the skill to resurrect him. I had to teach myself. And that took time.

DOROTHEA

And you think he'll be in a fit state to resurrect, after thirteen years?

BUTTERFIELD

If he was just a man like me, then no. But he's not.

DOROTHEA

What is he?

BUTTERFIELD

Maybe he'll show you.

ON DOROTHEA, terror in her eyes.

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Now there are a dozen vehicles parked around the house. Through the windows, the flickering of oil-lamp FLAMES.

There is a low, ominous CHANT floating from the house.

It has no words, but it is steadily BUILDING in intensity. We DRIFT towards the front door.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

Now we move down the passageway to the Meditation Room.

Inside, SEVENTEEN CULTISTS kneel in a circle. They are all CUTTING OFF THEIR HAIR, and throwing it into the FIRE that blazes in the centre of the circle. They hack

indiscriminately, with KNIVES, SCISSORS and RAZORS, their eyes wild. BLOOD runs down their faces and necks from nicked ears and scalps.

And still the CHANT BUILDS, and BUILDS...

NORMAN

He will come! He will come! He will come!

EXT. DESERT - NIX'S GRAVE - NIGHT

Wide. A few rocks, and emptiness.

The headlamps of Butterfield's sedan burn in the darkness, illuminating the dig. Valentin is in the grave, digging.

ON Butterfield, as he stands at the edge of the hole, watching the work. Dorothea stands a yard or two behind him.

BUTTERFIELD

Anything?

VALENTIN (V.O.)

Not yet.

Butterfield squats at the edge of the hole and suddenly reaches out for Valentin, hauling him close.

BUTTERFIELD

If you've lied to me to me --

VALENTIN

I swear... this is the place Swann told me about. The rocks...

On Dorothea, who uses Butterfield's distraction to take a few steps back towards the open car door.

Dorothea's P.O.V. of Butterfield, back to her, interrogating Valentin.

BUTTERFIELD

Five more minutes. Hear me? And you'd better not --

A SOUND behind him. Butterfield wheels round. On the ground beside the open car door, the instruments.

BUTTERFIELD

What the fuck are you playing at?

He goes to pick them up. Dorothea steps from behind the door, with the sharpest in her hand. She slashes at him. Opens a WOUND across his arm.

BUTTERFIELD

Aah!

He comes at her suddenly, striking the instrument from her hand, and slamming her against the car. He hits her. Once. Twice. Then --

VALENTIN (V.O.)

Butterfield!

Butterfield goes to the edge of the grave, picks up the flashlight and trains the beam on Valentin.

VALENTIN

(blinded)

In the corner...

The beam goes to the corner of the grave.

A mummified HAND is sticking out of one of the walls.

BUTTERFIELD

(to Valentin)

Keep away from it.

Butterfield jumps down into the grave, and goes to the hand. The TRACK is silent, but for Butterfield's shallow breath. He reaches out to touch Nix's fingers...

Closer...

Closer...

He touches the hand - and the wall of sand comes down with a **ROAR!**

He jumps back as Nix's corpse, his head still sealed by the mask rolls into view.

VALENTIN

Oh Christ! Oh Christ!

BUTTERFIELD

(reverentially)

It's him... it's him.

On Dorothea, sliding down the car in despair.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRY'S CAR - NIGHT

The car is static; the engine still running.

HARRY

They got here before us.

SWANN

Looks that way.

EXT. NIX'S GRAVE - NIGHT

Harry gets out of the car and starts towards the open grave.

HARRY'S MOVING P.O.V. OF THE GRAVE

Harry reaches the grave's-edge. It's totally dark. He peers in. On his heel, as the ground CRUMBLES beneath his weight. Harry slides into the grave.

HARRY

Shit!

He's in darkness now. He gets to his feet, and starts to try and scramble out.

HARRY

Swann? Swann!

Silence.

Suddenly, a hand is laid on his shoulder! Harry swings round. It's Valentin. He has been badly cut up.

VALENTIN

D'Amour --

HARRY

Shit...

VALENTIN

Help me.

He collapses into Harry's arms.

HARRY

Swann!

INT. HARRY'S CAR - NIGHT

Indecision is written all over Swann's face: to help or not to help?

HARRY (V.O.)

Swann!

He decides. Gets out.

EXT. NIX'S GRAVE - MIGHT

Swann goes to the graveside, terrified.

HARRY

Give me a hand. I got Valentin.

Together, Harry and Swann lift Valentin out of the grave and lay him in the blaze of the headlamps.

VALENTIN

He's got Dorothea.

SWANN

And Nix?

VALENTIN

Him too.

HARRY

We've got to get you to a hospital.

VALENTIN

Don't bother.

HARRY

Shut up. We've lost enough lives already.

VALENTIN

I'm sorry, D'Amour...

HARRY

What about?

VALENTIN

... Looks like you're going...
to lose... one more.

Valentin dies.

HARRY

(despairing)
... no...

SWANN

He's better off this way.

HARRY

(furious)

Nobody's better off this way!

SWANN

You don't get it, do you? We're
shit. D'Amour.

He puts his foot beneath Valentin's body. It rolls back into
Nix's grave.

SWANN

That's where we're all going.

HARRY

In my time, and nobody else's.

ON THE EMPTY GRAVE, as we HEAR the SOUND of Harry and Swann
getting into the car. The doors SLAM. The CAR LIGHTS
retreat. The grave is left to DARKNESS.

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is silent now.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAYS - NIGHT

We TRACK through the house. The CULTISTS, all Seventeen of
them, stand in the passageways, looking toward Nix's sanctum.

ON THE SANCTUM DOOR. Butterfield emerges. He is wearing
WHITE now.

BUTTERFIELD

Do you wish him to be amongst us?

CULTISTS

Yes...

BUTTERFIELD

Will you come to him on your
knees?

CULTISTS

Yes...

BUTTERFIELD

Be ready.

Now we see that the Cultists have BOTTLES in their hands. With looks of ecstatic fervour on their faces, they SMASH the bottles to the ground at their bare feet. Then they pick up MORE BOTTLES, and SMASH them, littering the ground with razor sharp pieces of GLASS.

ON Butterfield, smiling. He steps back into the Sanctum.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - NIGHT

HIGH, WIDE SHOT of the room, as Butterfield approaches the BODY of Nix. It lies on a table, surrounded by bowls of OIL. Bandages, soaked in oil, are laid over its limbs. Beside its head, Butterfield's INSTRUMENTS are laid out.

ON Dorothea, crouched in the corner of the room, terrified as she watches Butterfield remove the multi-part MASK screwed into Nix's face. He works with surgical precision.

DOROTHEA

Listen. You've got everything you want. You don't need me. ..

A piece of the mask comes away from the cheek. A subtle POWER plucks at dust around the room, disturbing it minutely. We CUT CLOSE to Dorothea's face throughout this sequence (on occasion her eyeball fills the screen) as she sees these signs of disturbance in the ether, growing in magnitude.

BUTTERFIELD

No, but he will. After what you did to him.

He pulls a piece of the mask from Nix's mouth.

BUTTERFIELD

He'll want vengeance. Simple PS that.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAYS - NIGHT

The bottle-breaking has ceased. The Cultists stand, breathless with anticipation.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - NIGHT

On Nix's emaciated mouth. The lips TWITCH.

On Dorothea. The DUST moves around her.

And Nix DRAWS BREATH.

On Butterfield, TEARS in his eyes.

BUTTERFIELD

Oh my Lord. He's coming home...

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

The whisper runs through the congregation:

CULTISTS

He's coming home... he/s coming home...

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - NIGHT

ON Dorothea, eyes wide.

DOROTHEA

Christ in Heaven.

ON Nix, as his body starts to thirstily soak up the oils. His withered flesh starts to REHYDRATE; his veins start to **THROB**.

Butterfield is watching the process in amazement. Nix's HANDS move up to his face, where the last portion of the mask is still screwed over his eyes.

BUTTERFIELD

He's with us...

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

CULTISTS

He's with us... He's with us...

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - NIGHT

Unnoticed by Butterfield, who has his eyes on Nix, Dorothea gets to her feet and creeps away to the door. Very quiet **TRACK**.

Suddenly, the snake-handling Cultist steps into view, snakes coiled around his face and fingers!

DOROTHEA

Oh God!

Butterfield looks up.

BUTTERFIELD

Hold her!

On Nix, as he starts to pull at the mask on his face. It comes away with a moist, WRENCHING SOUND. At last, we see his eyes.

NIX'S P.O.V.

The candle-lights blaze, BLINDING his sensitive eyes.

NIX

(fury to agony)

Aaarrgh!

He gets up and flings himself around the room, knocking over all the lights but two. Then he strikes Butterfield to the ground, and slams his foot on Butterfield's neck, knocking him unconscious. It's a terrifying, almost demoniacal display of instant physical superiority. Throughout, he literally ROARS in rage.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

The Cultists SCREAM in sympathy, letting out years of repressed frustration. Many of them are dancing on the shards of glass now, crazed.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT NEAR NIX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Harry's car is parked a quarter mile from Nix's house. He is getting out. Swann stays put.

The SOUND of SCREAMING is carried towards them on the wind.

HARRY

(spooked)

Jesus... what the hell's going on in there?

SWANN

At a guess... they just resurrected him.

HARRY

Fuck.

Harry starts towards the house. After a beat, Swann gets out of the car and follows.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM- - NIGHT

On Butterfield, as Nix removes his foot. Butterfield is out for the count.

On Nix, as he stops screaming. His face is grotesquely disfigured by the mask, the flesh stained and corrupted.

The SCREAMING of the Cultists is dying away.

NIX

Children...

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

The Cultists all face the Sanctum door, awaiting instruction.

NIX

Will you suffer to come unto me?

One by one, the Cultists fall to their knees. We never see flesh pierced by broken glass. But we HEAR IT, and see the agony on the Cultist's faces. They start to sob.

Then, Nix appears in the doorway, mostly hidden by shadow.

NIX

I've come back to share the wisdom of the grave. Will you hear it?

CULTISTS

Yes... yes...

NIX

Follow me then.

He steps out of the doorway. The Cultists let out sobs of adoration. Nix locks at Dorothea.

NIX

Do I know you, child?

He reaches for her. Pulls her close to his body. Dorothea keeps her self-possession; but only just.

NIX

Oh yes... I do, don't I? No gun this time, child?

(a beat)

Where's Swann?

DOROTHEA

I don't know where he is.

Nix picks her up, so that her feet are inches off the ground.

NIX

He'll come. We've got unfinished
business, he and I.

Then he carries her down the passageway to the Meditation Room, walking on the glass, apparently indifferent to the wounds he's receiving.

The Cultists follow.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

Nix strides into the middle of the room.

NIX

(whispered to Dorothea)
Something terrible's going to
happen. But if you hold on to me,
very tight, you may live a little
longer.

The Cultists enter the room, knees and hands BLOODY.

NIX

(to Cultists)
Are you ready for my wisdom?

CULTISTS

Tell us... tell us...

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - NIGHT

Harry pushes open the window, and climbs in. Swann follows. He is frozen by the memory of what happened here.

ON SWANN, as the TRACK fills with eerie ECHOES of that terrible event. Nix's SCREAMS. The GUN-SHOTS. The sound of the SCREWS GRINDING into Nix's flesh.

SWANN

(in terrified awe)
This is where we killed him.

HARRY

(looking at table)
You didn't try hard enough.

SWANN

I can't... I can't go any
further...

Harry nods, and gently detaches his arm from Swann's panicked grip. He crosses to the door.

Suddenly. Butterfield reaches out of the darkness, and catches hold of Harry's leg. throwing him to the ground.

He has one of the INSTRUMENTS in his hand. He STABS at Harry, striking the ground between Harry's legs.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

NIX

Here is my wisdom.

He stamps on the ground. CRACKS spread from his foot in all directions. ON THE CULTISTS, amazed by this manifestation of power.

BARBARA

Show us. Puritan.

NORMAN

Yes, show us!

ALL

Show us! Show us!

With a ROAR, a PIT four or five feet across opens up beneath Nix and Dorothea. Nix HOVERS over it. It's utterly dark; perhaps bottomless.

Dorothea SCREAMS!

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM- - NIGHT

Hearing Dorothea's CRY, Harry looks back towards the passageway. Butterfield pulls the instrument out of the ground and stabs at Harry a second time. But Swann catches hold of his arm.

SWANN

(to Harry)

Whatever he's doing to her, stop
him!

And Harry's up and away --

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

-- he dashes over the glass --

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

On Nix, Dorothea clasped close to him. He REVOLVES as he floats over the chasm below then.

NIX

(to unseen Cultists)

You see, I escaped the grave. So I have to give something to the grave in return.

On the Cultists, listening to their lord with love in their eyes.

A SLIT OPENS in the middle of Nix's forehead, above the bridge of his nose (this is an image we saw in the prints in the library), and from it comes a WAVE OF DARKNESS. As Nix REVOLVES, the darkness STRIKES the GROUND around the Cultists.

At first they don't realize what's going on. They think this is some kind of bizarre blessing.

Then the ground starts to LIQUIFY beneath them.

NORMAN

What's happening?

NIX

I have to give something back. So I'm giving you.

They're starting to SCREAM now as they sink into the ground. They struggle, of course, but the earth seems to be hungry for them. They are dragged down, THRASHING as they SINK.

BARBARA

(sobbing)

Why? Why?

NIX

You're not worthy. None of you. Only Swann was worthy. You just waited like lambs.

Harry appears in the doorway. Nix, still swinging round, has his back to Harry.

NIX

Well I'm not your shepherd.

Harry surveys the horrific scene in front of him. The ground is now re-solidifying around the Cultists, some of whom have disappeared from view completely, some of whom still reach up out of the dirt. The scene has a surreal beauty to it despite its horror. SCREAMING FACES locked in the solid ground. TWITCHING HANDS the same. Harry starts towards Nix and Dorothea, GUN levelled. So far, he has avoided Nix's gaze.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - NIGHT

Butterfield and Swann are locked in a life-or-death struggle. They tumble back against the table upon which Nix was resurrected. It collapses under them, and for a moment Swann is stunned. Butterfield snatches up one of the instruments and STABS at Swann, who rolls out of the way in the nick of time.

The BLADE catches him in the arm, however.

SWANN

Aah!

BUTTERFIELD

Go on, bleed.
(he slashes at Swann
again)
Go on! Go on!

Butterfield comes after him, and Swann backs off against a wall. He SPITS out a serpentine FLAME, which races across the floor and leaps at Butterfield's face!

BUTTERFIELD

(screaming)

No!

He falls backwards, his face ON FIRE. Swann doesn't wait to watch him die, but races out into the passageway, BLOOD running from his wound.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

Harry is staring up at Dorothea as he very gingerly crosses the still-sticky ground. He's a yard from the edge of the pit now.

Nix swings round.

NIX

You're not Swann. Who are you?

(a beat))
Oh... I know what you want. He lets
Dorothea slip from his arms.

Harry flings himself towards the hole and CATCHES HOLD of
Dorothea's arm before she falls away into the abyss. His GUN
goes spinning across the ground, back towards the door
leading to the passageway.

DOROTHEA

Oh God!

HARRY

Hang on!

Nix reaches down to torment Harry. But before he can make
contact

SWANN (V.O.)

Nix!

Nix looks up.

NIX

There you are.

Suddenly, Nix isn't interested in Harry and Dorothea. He
steps onto solid ground, and walks towards Swann, his tone
suddenly conversational.

NIX

I've had a lot of time to think
about you. Where I went wrong...

With Nix's back turned, Harry pulls Dorothea back out of the
chasm.

SWANN

And?

NIX

I should have been honest with you,
right from the start. I wasn't
born to show people the error of
their ways. I was born to murder
the world.

ON HARRY, as he leads Dorothea to the door. Harry glances
back into the room.

NIX

You could still help me do that.

SWANN

Why would I want to?

NIX

Because you've got nothing else to live for.

SWANN

Not true.

NIX

The woman has a new love in her life. Your friends are dead. Nobody's left to save you, but me

He lays his hands on Swann. Draws him into an embrace.

ON HARRY and Dorothea.

HARRY

(to Dorothea)

I've got to help him.

DOROTHEA

You can't.

HARRY

Nix has got to have a weak spot. Everybody's got a fucking weak spot.

A NOISE. He turns, and suddenly --

Butterfield is there! His face is horribly burned, but he's still very much alive.

BUTTERFIELD

Bastard!

He launches himself at Harry, driving them both back into the BROKEN GLASS. A FIGHT ensues, carrying them out into the Passageway.

Nix has Swann in a bear-hug.

NIX

Will you help me?

A beat. Then Swann nods.

SWANN

Yes.

Nix lets him go.

NIX

You know I'll kill you when we're done. I have to.

SWANN

Yes.

NIX

But until then... it's you and me... the way it always was.

SWANN

Yes.

Dorothea, at the doorway, watches this bizarre exchange. Swann's eyes flicker towards her. Nix turns.

NIX

Wait... you still feel something for that bitch?

SWANN

No!

NIX

Liar!

Nix makes a gesture, and Swann is flung against the wall, pinned there like a fly, legs off the ground.

NIX

Will! You! Never! Learn!?

With each word, Nix almost casually throws a gesture in Swann's direction, and though there is six feet between them, they have the force of terrible blows. One to the ribs. They CRACK. One to the face. It BLEEDS. One to the legs, one to the arms. They all BREAK. Then Nix turns towards Dorothea.

NIX

She's just flesh, Swannnie-boy. I'll show you!

He moves towards Dorothea. Swann falls to the ground, broken.

SWANN

Harry!

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

The fight between Butterfield and Harry continues.

SWANN (V.O.)

Harry! Stop him!

Harry looks up. Sees Dorothea retreating from the door, and running off into the darkness.

Butterfield comes at Harry again. Harry's got no more time for this creep. He delivers Butterfield a backhand swipe, and Butterfield lands face down in the glass. We don't see the impact. HEARING it's enough.

Harry looks down at the body. Then --

NIX (V.O.)

Where is she?

Harry turns.

Nix is on him like a luaoernaut. treading on Butterfield's body as he comes at Harry!

NIX

Where did she go?

Nix GRABS hold of Harry's head with one hand and PRESSES the fingers of -the other hand against Harry's TEMPLES. He struggles to get free, but Nix is simply too powerful.

Nix's fingers slowly SLIDE BENEATH the skin of Harry's temples. As before, there's no blood.

NIX

You've got Swann's disease. You think a little courage, a little love, and it'll all be all right. Wrong!

His fingers slide all the way in!

HARRY

Oh God!

Harry wrests himself free of Nix, and stumbles away. His eyes are BLOOD-RED. Nix is a few yards behind him.

NIX

Tell me where she is... and I'll
make it go away...

Harry is reeling around in the grip of a nightmare.

HARRY'S P.O.V.

The apocalyptic images on the walls seem to move! A face
SCREAMS! FIRE blossoms!

ON HARRY, verging on insanity.

HARRY

Oh God... oh God...

HARRY'S P.O.V.

Harry sees a WOMAN, wrapped in the sickly-sensual embrace of
some glistening, barely visible OBSCENITY. We can't see her
face. Only her mouth is visible in the coils of her
devourer.

ON HARRY

as he approaches the wall, on which this woman is painted.
Reaching out for the image.

HARRY'S P.O.V.

The Woman reaches for Harry.

WOMAN

Help me.

ON HARRY

as he touches the wall.

HARRY

Dorothea!

He starts to SCRATCH out the plaster on which the image is
painted.

HARRY

Dorothea! Dorothea!

HARRY'S P.O.V.

Darkness swallows the image of the woman. She is still
screaming when she disappears.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

ON SWANN, dragging his broken body to the door.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

ON HARRY

literally beating his head against the wall!

HARRY

No! No! No!

DOROTHEA (V.O.)

Harry...

Harry stops. Dare he believe this is truly her voice?

DOROTHEA

It's not real, Harry-

Harry turns around. Dorothea is there.

HARRY'S P.O.V.

For a moment, he sees Dorothea as she is.

ON HARRY, relief flooding his face. Then --

HARRY'S P.O.V.

-- the image MORPHS. Dorothea's beauty is replaced by primeval muck.

ON HARRY, appalled. Dorothea grabs hold of him.

DOROTHEA

Harry. Listen to me. Whatever's good between us, believe it.

Harry's face is deathly white, and pouring SWEAT. He's fighting the delirium. Or doing his best.

HARRY

... oh... God...

DOROTHEA

I'm here, Harry.

HARRY

...yes?

DOROTHEA

Yes.

Nix steps from the shadows of the doorway behind Harry.

NIX

(to Dorothea)

There you are, child.

Harry starts to look round.

DOROTHEA

Don't look.

HARRY

I... have... to.

NIX

Come on, child. I want Swann to see you die.

Harry turns and looks at Nix.

HARRY'S P.O.V.

Nix's face darkens as it MORPHS. And the flesh in the middle of his brow UNFOLDS, revealing a dark, pulsating THIRD EYE.

NIX

(to Harry)

What are you looking at?

ON DOROTHEA, who has gone to the door of the Meditation Room and now slips inside.

ON HARRY, staring up at Nix.

ON DOROTHEA, re-emerging from the Meditation Room. In her hand, Harry's GUN. Harry looks round at her.

HARRY

(points to his brow)

There... there!

ON NIX, as he looks up at Dorothea.

ON DOROTHEA, as she raises the GUN. She FIRES.

The bullet STRIKES Nix's FOREHEAD. He sinks to his knees, BLOOD pouring down his face from the hole where his third EYE used to be.

ON HARRY, as Nix's mind-hold falters. He leans against the wall, shaking.

DOROTHEA

Harry?

HARRY

I'm okay. I'm okay.

Harry opens his eyes. Looks up at her.

HARRY'S P.O.V.

The last of the MORPHING fades. He sees Dorothea as she actually is. Dorothea goes down to comfort him, and they embrace.

Suddenly, a ROAR from Nix. They look towards him --

-- it isn't over.

One last, terrifying transformation is overtaking Nix as he kneels in the GLASS. His sallow flesh is running in STREAMS up his body towards the DARK HOLE in the middle of his forehead --

NIX

One... last... illusion...

-- his humanity is disappearing, vanishing into the vortex of the bullet wound.

DOROTHEA

Oh my God.

Harry and Dorothea start to get up...

Nix is no longer human. He is a shape of gleaming DARKNESS, stripped of features. He opens his mouth, the only visible element on his body is his toothed maw, which looses an utterly inhuman SHRIEK!

SWANN (V.O.)

... D'Amour...

Harry glances through the door into the Meditation Room. Swann is on the threshold.

Nix RISES now. He is a terrifying spectacle, his bulk somehow more intimidating than ever in this simplified form.

He comes at Dorothea, who has no choice but to back away into the Meditation Room.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

The pit still yawns in the middle of the floor. Dorothea is backed towards it by Nix.

When Nix SPEAKS, his voice is not remotely human. It is **DEMONIACAL**.

NIX

I am the purest of the pure. I am
the darkest of the dark...

Harry is at the door now, starting towards Nix.

SWANN

Harry. You can't kill him.

Harry crouches beside Swann.

HARRY

(whispers)
He did something with the ground.

SWANN

Yes?

HARRY

Can you do it?

SWANN

I don't know.

HARRY

Try.

ON DOROTHEA. She's a couple of yards from the pit now.

NIX (V.O.)

I'm beyond Heaven. I'm beyond
Hell.

Suddenly, Harry lunges at Nix, grabbing hold of his legs. Nix topples.

ON SWANN, who puts his hands on the ground. Closes his eyes.

A wave of LIQUIFICATION runs through the ground from Swann's broken fingers --

-- the Cultists' bodies MOVE in the softening ground, like corpses in surf, and ROLL towards the pit, their dead faces resurfacing --

Barbara's body floats past Nix, and disappears over the edge of the pit.

HARRY

(to Dorothea)

Get out of here!

The ground is very liquid now, and the corpses are lodging around Nix as they're all carried towards the pit. So's Harry, of course.

Nix tries to get up, but he's too late. The corpses weigh him down, the ground is too fluid for him to get a proper hold, and Harry still clings to his legs.

NIX

No! No! No!

He's at the edge of the pit.

DOROTHEA (V.O.)

Harry!

Harry looks round. Dorothea's behind him, risking the flowing ground to offer him a hand.

Nix starts to fall into the pit. At the last minute, he reaches for Harry, as --

-- Harry is pulled out of reach by Dorothea.

Together they stumble to THE DOOR, where Swann still lies. They look back to see

NIX, as he goes over the edge of the pit and FALLS SCREAMING.

At the door, Dorothea lifts up Swann's head. He's dead. She closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PIT

What we are about to witness is the longest fall-to-his-death by any villain in the history of cinema...

Nix is falling through rock. Still SCREAMING. He CRASHES against a layer of stone, which his body smashes to

smithereens. And as he falls --

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

DOROTHEA

Is it finished?

HARRY

I think so.

No it's not. Nix keeps falling, breaking through another layer of rock as he descends deeper and deeper into the earth.

And now... there's a hint of FIERY LIGHT below. He's approaching MAGMA.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

DOROTHEA

Come on...

She puts her arms around him. Kisses him, sobbing with relief.

INT. THE PIT

Nix hits a layer of molten rock, and, SCREAMING, he disappears. A BURST of dark, roiling ENERGY erupts from the spot where he sank, and starts up the pit --

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

The room TREMBLES. There's a ROAR in the earth.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

HARRY

What the fuck?

DOROTHEA

Harry-?

HARRY

Out! Out!

They race for the front door --

INT. THE PIT

-- the wave of ENERGY, like a howling, dark WIND, ascends at a breath-taking rate

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

Harry and Dorothea race for the open air, as

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

The ENERGY ERUPTS from the pit.

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Harry and Dorothea stumble out, into the night --

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - VARIOUS - NIGHT

The ENERGY howls from room to room, ERODING the images off the walls, BLOWING out the doors, DESTROYING all the resurrection equipment in the Sanctum --

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - DESERT - DAWN

Harry and Dorothea stumble to the car. They look back at the house, as the cacophony of destruction dies down.

ON THE RIM OF THE SUN, as it peeps over the desert horizon.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - VARIOUS - DAWN

The SUNLIGHT creeps through the rooms as the DUST settles.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - DAWN

The hole in the floor CLOSES UP, and is SEALED... SILENCE reigns.

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - DESERT - DAWN

Harry and Dorothea get into the car. Harry glances back at the house. Nothing.

HARRY

(quietly)

It's finished.

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - IDOLS - DAWN

ON THE IDOLS and the FRONT DOOR, virtually destroyed by time.

WE DRIFT THROUGH THEM, INTERCUTTING WITH:

EXT. HARRY'S CAR - DESERT ROAD - DAWN

Harry's car speeds away, leaving a plume of dust as

THE CREDITS ROLL